Publicness and the public in contemporary Indonesian documentary film cultures

Sasono, Eric

Awarding institution:
King's College London

Publicness and the Public in Contemporary Indonesian Documentary Film Cultures

Eric Sasono

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Film Studies
School of Art and Humanities
King's College London
January 2019

Publicness and the Public in Contemporary Indonesian Documentary Film Cultures

Abstract

This thesis investigates the academically neglected topic of documentary film culture in Indonesia since the political change of 1998. It asks: what kind of documentary film cultures have been established since the 1998 political change? As the infrastructure and channels for documentary film distribution have been barely exist, how do they circulate among their public and what type of institutional arrangements involved to make documentary films able to get circulated in Indonesia? Furthermore this asks: how this documentary culture is related to publicness and the discussion of the public in Indonesia?

This thesis approaches publicness through the tension between local and global settings, and the aesthetic and the institutional. Grounding the discussion on the transition from authoritarian regime into a more open political situation that occurred since 1998 in Indonesia, the thesis examines constrain and support for documentary films to reach their publics and getting the subject matter contributing into the discussion about the public.

Using close observation, semi-structured interviews and archival holdings, three key documentary organisations in Indonesia have been examined: In-Docs, Festival Film Dokumenter Yogyakarta, and Watchdoc Documentary Maker.

In-Docs has been the pioneer of documentary film culture in post 1998 Indonesia. The thesis finds that their establishment of a network linking the film community to civil society organisations also establishes the idea of publicness as an alternative to government narratives. Festival Film Dokumenter Yogyakarta is the first and the biggest documentary film festival in Indonesia. Taking place in Yogyakarta, 450 kilometers from the capital city, the thesis argues the festival demonstrates the tension and interplay between local, national and global publicness in Indonesian documentary film culture. In Watchdoc, a private documentary film production house, the thesis finds that the organisation posits documentary film as part of social movements to generate further discussion on public policy and instigates an idea of social justice as part of the public debate.

Keywords: documentary film, documentary film culture, film and publicness, the public, film and public space, film festival and political engagement, film and civil society.

Contents

Abstract 2

Acknowledgement 6

Chapter I 7

Introduction 7

Key findings 19

Chapter breakdown 24

Chapter 2 30

Literature review on publicness and the public 30

Public sphere 32

Counterpublics and the media 35

Publicness and emotion 46

Publicness in scholarly research on Indonesia 50

The New Order and *Reformasi* 54

Civil society organisations in Indonesia 60

The media 66

Film and public 69

Conclusion 82

Chapter 3 84

Approach and Methodology 84

The research 93

Methodology 97

Data gathering: Interviews and observation 101

Self-reflexivity 106

Chapter 4 111

Indonesian Documentary Film Centre (In-Docs): Asserting the Importance of Documentary Film in Indonesia 111

Historical background 114

Documentary and *Reformasi* 121

The beginning of In-Docs 127

In-Docs Workshops 144

New documentary film culture 157

Conclusion 176

Chapter 5 182
Festival Film Dokumenter Yogyakarta: Celebrating Documentary Films and Beyond 182
Film festivals in Indonesia 186
Yogyakarta as the arena 200
Celebrating documentary film in post-1998 Indonesia 205
Screening programmes 215
Non-screening programmes 224
Conclusion 244
Chapter 6 248
Watchdoc Documentary Maker: Documentary film and social movements 248
TV documentary in a transitional period 250
Watchdoc and non-government organisations 276
Documentaries and *layar tancap* 291
Indonesia as imagined abroad 320
Conclusion 331
Chapter 7 333
Conclusion 333
Further study 355
Bibliography 359

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Professor Chris Berry, who has guided me, intellectually and personally, throughout the process of my PhD. His guidance has been so significant, without which I probably would never be able even to finish this thesis.

I would also like to thank the examiners, Dr Leshu Torchin and Professor Fridus Steijlen, who have given enthusiastic comments and feedbacks to the thesis.

To the people I interviewed for this thesis, I would also like to express my gratitude: the late Abduh Aziz; Shanty Harmayn, Amelia Hapsari and Varadila of In-Docs; Nobertus Nuranto, Alia Damaihati and Dwi S. Nugraheni of FFD; Dandhy Laksono, Andy Panca Kurniawan, Hellena Souisa and Dhuha Ramadhani of Watchdoc. Their participation and generosity are critical parts of the completion of this project.

Along the way, I met Shinta Putri. I thank her for her curiosity and lengthy conversation that have fuelled me with energy at the end of this PhD journey.

To my siblings: Mas Tom, Eneng, Dian and Lis and all the nephews who have been supportive in the entire process even though I know you always miss me for my absence in the annual gathering during Eid festival. To my late parents, deepest love to both of you. I miss you very much.

Gratitude is also expressed to my former wife, Maya. Regardless of the fact that we have parted ways during this PhD journey, her support has played an important part in this thesis.

Finally, the biggest gratitude is for my son Hatta Bijaksana, who had turned from a curious teenager when I started this project, into a young intellectual and an avid interlocutor who has been sharp and critical for my intellectual development. This work is dedicated for you.

Chapter I
Introduction

This thesis investigates the academically neglected topic of documentary film culture in Indonesia since the political change of 1998. This change, known as *Reformasi,* or reform, is considered to be a momentous event; the authoritarian regime (known as the New Order) led by the late Haji Muhammad Soeharto, who had ruled the country for 32 years, was forced from power by a student movement.

The main question asked by this thesis is: what kind of documentary film culture has been established since the 1998 political change? The *Reformasi* has only recently opened Indonesia for the development of the infrastructure and channels necessary for documentary film production and distribution, so how do these films circulate among the public and what type of institutional arrangements are involved? Furthermore, this thesis asks how this documentary culture is related to publicness and the debate on the public in Indonesia. Publicness here is understood in the opposition to the political operations of an arcane society, where public affairs are hidden from public participation. The understanding of publicness is also taken from Alastair Hannay's interpretation of the idea of the public sphere:

> …a room for manoeuvre that had to be created in defiance of the interests and de facto private confines of an absolute power. But the public sphere is also an arena in which matters are conducted 'in public'.[1]

[1] Alastair Hannay, *On the Public* (London: Routledge, 2005), 34-35.

A key part of this discussion is the transition from the authoritarian regime to the more open political situation that followed, which has had an enormous impact on the factors that constrained or supported documentary films in reaching the public and allowing their subject matters to enter public discussion. Another key issue is the growth of new documentary film practices and documentary film subject matters that contribute to how the public is discussed in Indonesia.

This thesis approaches publicness through the tension between the aesthetic and the institutional, as well as the variety of responses to documentary films in local, national and global settings. In each case, it is not a matter of choosing one or the other. Rather, these dynamic tensions will guide elaboration on the conception of publicness and discussion of the public, forming interrelated aspects of the multiple understandings of these terms.

Using close observation, semi-structured interviews and archival holdings, three key documentary organisations in Indonesia have been examined: Indonesian Documentary Film Centre (In-Docs), Festival Film Dokumenter (FFD) Yogyakarta, and Watchdoc Documentary Maker (Watchdoc). These organisations have been intensively and extensively working on documentary film production, training, screening and other practices, mostly on non-profit basis. In-Docs has been the pioneer of documentary film culture in post-1998 Indonesia. The thesis finds that In-Docs has managed to link the film community to civil society organisations and this linking has established the idea of publicness as the key idea during the transition from authoritarian political settings. Festival Film Dokumenter Yogyakarta is the first and largest documentary film festival in Indonesia, taking place in Yogyakarta, 450 kilometres from the capital city of Jakarta. This thesis argues that the festival

demonstrates the tension and interplay between local, national and global publicness in Indonesian documentary film culture as well as the importance of the role of stakeholders in public sector, rather than festival circuit, in forming counterpublic in documentary film culture in Indonesia. In Watchdoc, a private documentary film production house, the thesis finds that the organisation posits documentary film as part of a social movement to generate further discussion on public policy, and it also promotes the idea of social justice as part of the public debate. Through Watchdoc case, I would also argue on the formation of public based on sentiment and emotion to provide class-based experience for urban poor for creation of political engagement, rather than merely based on subjectivity that belongs to the middle class.

My interest in researching this subject is personal as well as academic. My motivation stemmed from a moving experience on watching a documentary film called *The Act of Killing* (directed by Joshua Oppenheimer, 2012). Joshua Oppenheimer's documentary about the unrepentant perpetrators of the 1965 massacre in Indonesia[2] was relevant to me personally as it made me aware that my late uncle – an officer in the Indonesian army's special forces unit – used to train civilians to kill the alleged members of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), the victims of this massacre. My late father also admitted that he participated in

[2] On the 1965 massacre, see John Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder: The 30th September Movement and Suharto's Coup D'etat in Indonesia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006); and the more recent books: Geoffrey B. Robinson, *The Killing Season: A History of the Indonesian Massacre 1965-66* (Princeton: Priceton University Press, 2018), and Jess Melvin, *The Army and Indonesian Genocide: The Mechanics of Mass Murder* (New York: Routledge, 2018).

neighbourhood patrol to spot people suspected of being PKI members or sympathizers[3].

This experience led me to write about *The Act of Killing* for my master's dissertation at the University of Nottingham. I was startled by the strength of this documentary, which was able to ask serious questions about the atrocities, which have been normalised across the nation and, as highlighted by the documentary, have created the foundation of the nation's identity[4] and offered the underpinnings for state-building. Various studies have covered the 1965 events which, in the view of one Indonesian scholar, were an 'epochal break' in Indonesian history providing the necessary condition for capital accumulation[5] and the formation of the modern state of Indonesia[6].

Since the release of *The Act of Killing*, documentary film in Indonesia has been 'promoted' into the public realm, and institutions outside the film community have started to pay serious attention. This is in contrast to the New Order era, when documentary film was considered to be a propaganda tool for the state and ignored by the audience. During this time, documentary films were used to promote the

---

[3] The story is recorded by BBC Indonesia as a witness to the history of the 1965 massacre in Indonesia. See Rebecca Henschke and Haryo Wiryawan "*Peristiwa 65 dan PKI: Wajah Para Korban dan Pelaku*," (1965 Events and Indonesian Communist Party: Faces of Victims and Perpetrators), in *BBC Indonesia*. 3 June 2016, accessed 25 October 2018, https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/berita_indonesia/2016/06/160531_indonesia_kuburan_masal_jegong, (My translation).

[4] John Roosa and M. Zaki Husain, "Prof. John Roosa: Identitas bangsa Indonesia berubah total sesudah 1965" (Prof. John Roosa: Indonesian identity has totally changed after 1965), in *Indoprogress*, 17 September 2012, accessed 25 October 2018 https://indoprogress.com/2012/09/wawancara-2/. (My translation)

[5] Hilmar Farid, "Indonesia's Original Sin: Mass Killings and Capitalist Expansion, 1965–66," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 6, no. 1 (2005): 3-16.

[6] Richard Robison, *Indonesia: The Rise of Capital* (Singapore: Equinox Publishing, 2009).

achievements of economic development in Indonesia. The documentary series entitled *Gelora Indonesia* (Zeal of Indonesia) produced by *Pusat Produksi Film Negara* (PFN, State Film Production Centre), told success stories of economic development, and screenings for the opening of fiction films[7]. The PFN also monopolised documentary film production.

The other distribution channel for documentary during the New Order was *Televisi Republik Indonesia* (Television of the Republic of Indonesia, a state-owned TV station), which monopolised television in the country until the early 1990s. They aired documentaries about state ceremonies or ethnic tribes residing in remote area of the country[8] to provide the sense that Jakarta was the centre and other regions were the 'periphery'[9]. In general, documentary film was seen as inferior and barely existent in film culture in New Order Indonesia, despite some efforts by film students in Jakarta in the 1980s exploring cinematic formats through documentary and short films[10].

The attention that has appeared since *The Act of Killing* has not necessarily been positive, as the state apparatus has become anxious about people making audio-visual recordings of sensitive topics in Indonesia. For example, in 2015, an Indonesian exile, who is also a 1965 survivor and taken Swedish citizenship, was questioned by the police and then deported when he recorded his visit to his father's grave in the

---

[7] Katinka Van Heeren, *Contemporary Indonesian Film: Spirit of the Reform, Ghost from the Past*, (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2012), 88-89.

[8] Budi Irawanto, "Beyond Big Dramatic Moments: Indonesian Documentary Films in the 21st Century", in *Asian Documentary Today* (ed.) Jane H.C. Yu and Asian Network of Documentary (Busan: Busan International Film Festival, 2012), 109-129.

[9] Krishna Sen and David T. Hill, *Media, Culture and Politics in Indonesia*, (Singapore: Equinox, 2006), 110-111.

[10] David Hanan, *Cultural Specificity in Indonesian Film*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 160-161.

province of West Sumatra[11]. Two British journalists have also been taken into custody and then jailed for the 'crime' of producing without a permit a documentary in the Malacca Strait about piracy[12]. Even during the authoritarian regime of the New Order, such cases usually ended up in deportation rather than imprisonment. Some more 'negative' responses toward documentary film can also be seen in the protests that have been staged at some public screenings of documentary films covering sensitive topics[13].

On a more positive note, there are a few cases in which documentary film has been taken seriously by political leaders. After watching a documentary about homeless street buskers in Jakarta, the deputy governor of the city, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, made changes to the facilities in homeless shelters there[14]. The president responded directly to a documentary made by French filmmakers about the pollution of the Citarum River, stating in a video published online that he would provide

---

[11] Syofiardi Bachyul Jb, "Men Deported for Visiting 1965 Tragedy Mass Grave," in *The Jakarta Post*, 19 October 2015, accessed 25 October 2017 http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/10/19/man-deported-visiting-1965-tragedy-mass-grave.html.

[12] Fadli, "British Journalist Deported" in *The Jakarta Post*, 11 November 2015, accessed 25 October 2017 http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/11/11/british-journalists-deported.html and also Rachel B. Middleton, "Indonesia: 2 British Journalists Face Up to 5 Years Jail for Making Documentary without Proper Visa" in *IB Times*, 30 September 2015, accessed 25 October 2017, https://www.ibtimes.co.uk/indonesia-2-british-journalists-charged-making-documentary-without-proper-visa-1521754.

[13] Ika Krismantari, "Documentary Provides Different Angle on the 1965 Tragedy" in *The Jakarta Post*, 19 March 2016, accessed 25 October 2017 http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2016/03/19/documentary-provides-different-angle-1965-tragedy.html.

[14] Anonymous, "*Dampak Film Jalanan Wakil Gubernur Jakarta Ubah Peraturan Daerah*" (Impact of '*Jalanan*' Deputy Governor Changed City Regulation) in *Rolling Stone*, 26th May 2014, accessed 25 October 2017, http://m.rollingstone.co.id/read/2014/05/26/152225/2592564/1093/dampak-film-jalanan-wakil-gubernur-jakarta-ubah-peraturan-daerah. (My translation).

leadership in cleaning up the river[15]. These latter cases illustrate that there has been a change in the role of documentary film in Indonesia, especially in comparison to its role under the New Order.

The Act of Killing has triggered bigger questions about the new role that documentary film has begun to play in Indonesia. Since the fall of the New Order, the media have undergone a transformation, in which their production and circulation has changed. It would be too hasty to call this 1998 political change a total break from the authoritarianism. But some differences in the media environment can easily be spotted, with changes in licensing, censorship[16] and other institutional arrangements regarding media production and circulation. In the words of Australian media scholar Krishna Sen, media in Indonesia "has been the site of every momentous transition in living history"[17], where political change in Indonesia is somehow reflected in the media environment and the media content. I believe documentary film also occupies the same position. In this sense, the thesis has parallels with the study of

---

[15] Famega Syafira, "Jokowi Janji Bersihkan Sungai Citarum: Berawal dari Kritikan Film Dokumenter?" (Jokowi Promised to Clean up Citarum River: Originated from Criticism in A Documentary Film?), *BBC Indonesia*, 2 March 2018, accessed 16 April 2018 https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/trensosial-43252218. (My translation).

[16] Government censorship no longer exists in the media, except for film, where the Censorship Agency (Lembaga Sensor Film, LSF) still plays an important role in censoring an audio visual medium – both for cinema distribution and TV broadcast. Regulation of TV programming is now done through an independent regulator, Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia (KPI, Indonesian Broadcasting Commission), while the government ministry has no longer be able to censor anything, either formally or informally. See Philip Kitley, "In Court with Indonesian Broadcasting Commission: Old Battles and New Identities in the Context of Reform", in *The Pacific Review*, 21, no.3, (July 2008): 351-367.

[17] Krishna Sen, "Introduction: Re-forming media in Indonesia's transition into democracy", in *Politics and The Media in Twenty-First Century Indonesia* (ed.) Krishna Sen and David Hill (New York: Routledge, 2011), 1.

documentary film in post-socialist China,[18] where a relatively new documentary film culture has been formed in relation with the state, market and other societal forces and institutions. This is the second motivation for the research: such transitions have been studied elsewhere, but there have been no academic studies on documentary film in Indonesia.

My research investigates documentary film culture in post-authoritarian Indonesia by asking several questions. How did this new documentary film culture come about? How do conceptions of publicness play a significant role in the new documentary film culture? How are institutional and narrative elements of this documentary film culture related to the notion of publicness? And how does this documentary culture contribute to the discussion of the public in Indonesia?

To answer these questions, I look at the different aspects of documentary film culture that were key in the development of three organisations specialising in documentary film: In-Docs, FFD Yogyakarta and Watchdoc. These aspects are not necessarily exclusive to one another; I see them as complementing each other in giving a broader picture of how this particular documentary culture has developed and how it connects to publicness.

The first is the institutional aspect of this culture. These three organisations have all been operating for a long period of time -- more than a decade – except for Watchdoc, which was established in 2010. The lengthy period of operation makes it possible to see how the dynamics of relationships and networks in such organisations

[18] See Chris Berry, "Getting Real: Chinese documentary, Chinese Postsocialism (2007)", in *Documentary Film Reader: History, Theory Criticism* (ed.) Jonathan Kahana (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 943-44.

changed through the 1998 political reform and beyond. It is long enough that practices within the organisations can reflect practices in documentary film culture at large. Their sustainability is also an important factor, considering the lack of infrastructure and governmental support for documentary films in general. The way these organisations sustain their operation was the entry point for looking at how documentary films are being received as part of media production, circulation and consumption in general, demonstrating the relevance of these organisations within general public culture. The fact that foreign NGO funding and embassy support have been highly significant in the establishment and operation of some of these organisations is also an interesting entry point to see how documentary film culture develops especially because it is based on the narrative of democracy, civic culture and citizen engagement in the public sphere.

These organisations have also been prevalent in media reports on documentary film in Indonesia due to the consistency and variety of their activities, and I believe this also has to be taken into account. These organisations have far-reaching influences over the production and circulation of documentary films in comparison with other organisations working in the field. This influence has even reached beyond film communities, leading other organisations to use documentary film as part of their activities.

The second aspect is the political aspect, where my research takes the socio-political conditions as important factors in the development of this documentary film culture. Here, the conception of publicness (or related terms such as civil society and the public sphere) in their socio-political setting are explored to portray the situation of post-authoritarian Indonesia. I ground my discussion on the assumption that

publicness has been at the forefront of the growth of this new documentary film culture, as this development can only be enabled with political openness. In this regard, publicness is seen as the opposite of the authoritarian political setting, and this is important in the context of political transition in a country like Indonesia.

The focus on publicness and the public in this thesis comes from a plea not to talk about the "impact" of documentary film on social and political life, because, regardless of a few cases mentioned above, thinking in terms of such a direct causal relationship might result in exaggeration of the role of documentary film in society. The thesis is basically a study into documentary film culture, rather than a political science study on Indonesia. Therefore, publicness and discussion of the public provides another way of talking about the role of documentary in the context of political transition and the post-authoritarian setting. Publicness is used in this thesis to talk about the criteria for openness, a situation in which a variety of public affairs can be circulated among the public at large through the media and other channels[19].

Publicness and the public will be discussed through a variety of approaches and these ideas will be discussed as socio-political criteria in a society. At this stage of the discussion in Indonesia, the basic criterion of openness in the political setting is important, because the term public makes sense in a political system free from dictatorship or authoritarian politics[20]. As a socio-political criterion, the term public is mostly associated with private individuals being able to put their politics in antagonism with that of others to reach a consensus. This understanding of public is

---

[19] See Edwin Jurriens, *From Monologue to Dialogue: Radio and Reform in Indonesia*, (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2009).

[20] Hannay, *On the Public*, 38-40.

sometimes viewed in opposition to the realm of the social, where are found human activities considered inferior to political actions, and limited to fulfilling the necessities of one's life. The term public is linked with a kind of social space that is idealized as an 'agora', an open, hybrid space for exchanging ideas, which also serves as the site for announcements or economic activities. This agora is sometimes presented as the space in which the idea of the 'public' is formed[21].

This thesis does not use that approach exclusively when looking at those social spaces in which the public is considered to be formed, especially when considering the concept of the private individual. Some other elements that are often considered to be private, such as emotion and feeling will also be considered in the investigation of publicness through the media engagement. Here, the role of emotion or sentiment is seen as a possible explanation relevant to the idea of publicness, especially considering it could be how individuals engage with the media[22].

Publicness in this thesis is mainly about the relations of individuals with the media, but in some cases, it also means a meeting, dialogue and political actions that happen in physical spaces, facilitated by the media, in particular documentary films. Therefore, the investigation of publicness and dialogue about the public in this thesis considers that the public meetings that happen around documentary film screenings are important, especially in looking at how media and understanding of space are intertwined. Media, especially electronic media and the internet, can transform

---

[21] Hannah Arendt, in her book, *The Human Condition*, argues for the agora as the ideal space for antagonism, and as the ideal way for humankind to reach their potential. See Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1958), 60.

[22] Zizi Papacharissi, *Affective Publics: Sentiment, Technology and Politics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 25.

understandings of socio-historical concepts such as nationalism, identity, and home.[23] Therefore, the examination of publicness in this thesis will incorporate a focus on the entanglement of the media with its spatial aspect. In looking at this spatial aspect, publicness can also be formed around the circulation of particular discourses[24] for a period of time.

My investigation of documentary film cultures in Indonesia is also informed by the idea of film culture as asserted by Janet Harbord, who emphasizes the entanglement of a film's aesthetics with its production and circulation in relation to the formation of the social. Harbord rejects the binaries of 'critical' versus 'complacent' or 'art' versus 'entertainment', incorporating network and infrastructure into examination of film aesthetics. Spectators' responses and film aesthetics are not seen as separated from social, political and economic institutions, especially where these relate to film production and circulation. For Harbord, the notion of taste and *avant garde* film, and other terms related to aesthetics, should not be put in opposition with a film's circulatory aspects. Rather, any evaluation of aesthetics should be discussed as inseparable from these[25]. Therefore, although aesthetics serves as the basis for making sense of modernity or the formation of social and political imagination in general, it should be examined in relation to the film's infrastructure and networks from the start.

---

[23] Chris Berry, Soyoung Kim and Lynn Spigel (ed.), *Electronic Elsewheres: Media, Technology and the Experience of Social Space* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

[24] Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2014), 67-69.

[25] Janet Harbord, *Film Cultures* (London: Sage, 2002), 2-3.

In regard to methodology, I took inspiration to media ethnography approach, which is to examine the media beyond the 'text' and placing the media practices as part of the media effect in the social and political context. This approach enables me to look at the institution as important as the media content whenever media impacts are brought into discussion. Rather than seeing the media solely based on the content or the production, this approach will also enable me to look at the audience and reception in general as part of the construct of the media world.

In addition to the methodology above, it should be noted that the organisations selected for this project lack formal archives to draw data from. These documentary film organisations are mainly community-run with, at best, a weak tradition in storing, cataloguing and providing data. Through observation of activities such as public screenings and public discussions, I investigate practices relating to documentary film production and circulation in my exploration of publicness and discussion of the public in Indonesia. I select and interpret data from notes I made during those activities in order to analyse the recent development of documentary film culture in Indonesia, which I hypothesize has had significant impact not only on wider film culture, but also on discussions about publicness in Indonesia.

Key findings

The fall of the authoritarian political regime in Indonesia led to new chances for film communities to produce and circulate their films without any significant restriction. The official censorship body *Lembaga Sensor Film* or LSF remains, but laws and regulations that used to restrict film production and circulation were abolished

after the transition. A relatively new generation of filmmakers has entered the scene, composed of those who came of age shortly before or during the transition from the New Order regime, and they have become the main production force in post-1998, especially due to their experimentation with subject matter and aesthetics[26]. Production and screenings of their films carried the feeling that they were a breakaway from the authoritarian regime and their film culture[27].

However, the lack of infrastructure for the production and circulation of documentaries has meant that these new filmmakers have had to find their own way to get their films produced and disseminated to their publics. At the early stage of the political transition, international non-government organisations (NGOs) and foreign embassies had a highly significant role in getting this new film culture to grow. In particular, funding for production and exhibition was provided to help assist a peaceful transition from authoritarianism after concerns about possible violence in the 1999 election. Documentary film communities worked together with NGOs conducting voter education, and that became one of the activities considered key in preventing the newly found openness descending into chaos. A few filmmakers in this new generation benefitted from this situation, and because of their expertise with audio-visual media and their involvement in civil movements, they could connect easily to the NGOs and civil society organisations in general.

The NGOs and foreign embassies wanted the recipients of the funding to be public, non-profit institutions rather than commercial entities, therefore some film

---

[26] Intan Paramaditha, "The Wild Child's Desire: Cinema, Sexual Politics and the Experimental Nation in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia," (PhD thesis, New York University, 2014).

[27] Yvonne Michalik and Laura Coppens, *Asian Hot Shot: Indonesian Cinema* (Marburg: Schuren Verlag, 2009), 26.

makers developed such organisations alongside their existing commercial production houses in order to receive this funding. This model has been developed by more established film makers because they can market themselves to the foreign NGOs and embassies, and then the non-profit wing of their venture can do the production and circulation. Documentary film culture has seen particular benefit from this scheme in certain subject areas, with NGOs and foreign embassies lavishing more funding on those that suit their causes.

During the same period, a big international film festival, Jakarta International Film Festival (JIFFest), became the main site for the development of this new documentary culture and film culture in general. It established a platform for exhibiting alternative films (compared with regular cinema screenings), as well as a new generation of filmgoers. More importantly, the tradition of serious evaluation of film aesthetics and discussion on documentary subject matter became possible as this film culture grew. The link to civil society organisations, NGOs and their causes started to establish itself as a model that benefitted both sides in the collaboration.

This situation dominated the documentary film culture for a while. Since the early 1990s, there had also existed minor practices hidden beneath the mechanisms of private TV stations, but it was not until later that such documentary practitioners, who are based on TV journalism, gained a bigger role and more exposure, widening their platform beyond TV stations. Through alternative screenings, such as open-air cinema, besides dissemination in the major cinema chains and online platforms, this strand of documentary film grounded in TV journalism started to enter the documentary film culture at large and involve itself in the wider conversations of politics. Such organizations began to speak eloquently about and fully own topics like

civil rights, social justice and other causes that usually belong to civil society organisations and NGOs, transforming them from a position servicing other organisations into owning public issues.

Film festivals are playing an important part in the growth of this culture and showcasing a critical juncture in film culture after the New Order regime. The political ambition of the New Order was to use film festivals as a political tool, focusing on displaying the supremacy of Jakarta, the centre of national culture, and representing this national culture in a way that could support economic development. This happened until the financial crisis of 1997 hit the country and the festivals stopped due to lack of national film production. Film producers shifted their business to the blooming TV industry[28].

In the post-authoritarian setting, film communities that started their life in the late 1990s have taken a chance by expanding their activities because they can now operate without having to obtain the state's permission like in the New Order era. Among them was Festival Film Dokumenter, which started as a club screening documentary films among university students in Yogyakarta, a city 450 kilometres away from Jakarta. Expansion of their screenings eventually turned into a growing festival. With financial support from a patron, the value of which gets smaller each year, the festival has managed to advance the idea of documentary film – and the festival – as part of non-formal education. At an aesthetic level, documentary film in Indonesia is considered to provide a more suitable avenue for building knowledge, as its audio-visual format is more in-line with Indonesian oral culture – people are more

[28] Thomas Barker, "A Cultural Economy of The Contemporary Indonesian Film Industry" (PhD thesis, National University of Singapore, 2011), 72.

willing to listen to stories than read. At the organisational level, the people involved in organising the festival consider it to be a place for learning. Based on these practices, they have managed to be self-sufficient, holding the festival with virtually no support from any government bodies or foreign funding.

The self-sufficiency of the festival has given the organisers an air of independence. The fact that it is located in Yogyakarta has added to this, separating it from the idea of centralised national film culture that was heavily promoted by the New Order regime. However, this festival also shows the importance of networks concerning to this documentary film culture: although the festival is not so financially dependent on outside sources, it relies on the stakeholders in the form of national and international civil society and philanthropic organisations, besides foreign embassies and cultural centres. Organisers have looked continuously to their network of contacts to supply films, as well as speakers for discussions, workshops and other festival activities. As a result of reliance on this network, the local-national-international has always been entangled in the development of this film culture. This stakeholder network has also shown a distinct characteristic of this documentary culture, which is linked to public funding and civil society organisation located outside the commercial mechanism. This has enabled the festival to become a counterpublic where the audience becomes ready to respond to social and political 'call' rather than being lured into the state's ideology as it happened during the New Order regime.

Chapter breakdown

This thesis is organised into seven chapters. Chapter two digs into discussions about publicness and the public in academic work and the study of how the terms are used in Indonesia and scholarly study about Indonesia. Considering the vastness of the literature on this subject, I lay out the chapter in two main sections. The first section focuses on work from a variety of disciplines that directly discusses the idea of publicness and the public, eventually leading into the understanding of these terms in politics and media. This starts from the elaboration of publicness as the opposite of closed-ness, then moves into criteria beyond semantics to make the term more applicable for the thesis project.

The second section involves research on Indonesia from different disciplines, but will focus mainly on the social sciences and humanities, especially media and film studies. This section reviews studies on Indonesian cinema, with special attention given to the notion of publicness and the public. Very little research has been done on documentary film in Indonesia. Most scholarly research only looks at documentary film as part of Indonesian screen culture while focusing mainly on fiction films and TV drama[29], or sees documentary film as an experiment done by post-1998 Indonesian filmmakers[30], or as part of film policy in Indonesia in comparison with film policy in Malaysia[31]. The specificity of documentary film and its relation to public culture deserves special attention, not least because of similar situations in a few other

---

[29] Ariel Heryanto, *Identity and Pleasure: The Politics of Indonesian Screen Culture* (Singapore: NUS Press Singapore, 2014).

[30] Paramaditha, "The Wild Child's Desire," 24.

[31] Budi Irawanto, "Emancipating Desire, Empowering Fantasy: Cultural Politics of Contemporary Cinema in Indonesia and Malaysia," (PhD thesis, National University of Singapore, 2014).

countries, especially in Asia[32]. The importance of documentary film has grown to an unprecedented level in Indonesia and public life has been imbued with the idea of documentary film as a format with the power to bring social and even political change. I do not subscribe to this idea, but as a film critic who has been writing about film for more than ten years, I feel this less-discussed subject deserves proper attention.

Chapter three explains the methodology of this research, which seeks to explain the link between documentary film and public cultures. In this chapter I explain the way I approach these three organisations during my fieldwork in Indonesia. Borrowing an approach called "organisation as process[33]" to get the sense of how the organisation is in operation and the "media world", which is the ethnographic approach in looking at media beyond the content and production sites, I visited the organisations and the events they organised to examine this relatively new film culture is being practiced on a day-to-day basis, rather than seeing these organisations as fixed entities.

This chapter continues with a section explaining some of the data I gathered for my research. Besides conducting semi-structured interviews with key personnel, I also collected archival materials (photos, media, newsletter, and so on) and publications (including newsletters, books, website snapshots, social media posts and

---

[32] For example, on the documentary film and public culture in China, see: Chris Berry, "Getting Real," 55; a more comprehensive note on postsocialist documentary and public culture in China in Yingchi Chu, *Chinese Documentary: From Dogma to Polyphony*, (New York: Routledge, 2007); Dan Edwards, *Independent Chinese Documentary: Alternative Visions, Alternative Publics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015); and Luke Robinson, *Independent Chinese Documentary: From the Studio to the Street* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[33] Tor Hernes, *Understanding Organisation as Process: Theory for A Tangled World* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

other publication materials), both online and offline. In addition, I gathered data based on close observation of the organisations, watching the way they operate and how they make decisions. At In-Docs, I joined workshops, training sessions, pitching sessions and other activities related to documentary film production and circulation. As for Festival Film Dokumenter (FFD) Yogyakarta, I participated in the festival as a jury member and as a speaker, as well as making close observations at some of the selected screenings. At Watchdoc, I joined one of their editorial meetings and attended an open-air screening they organised for the remaining inhabitants of a newly-evicted slum area.

Chapter four focuses on In-Docs, an organisation established in 2002 to support production, distribution and exhibition of documentary film, alongside providing education and training for documentary filmmakers. In looking at this organisation, the role of NGOs (local and international) and foreign embassies is highlighted to emphasise the formation of links between film communities and more politicised groups, civil society organisations and advocacy groups. In the early years of the political transformation, the film community started to seep into civil society organisations, seeking further significance beyond the entertainment industry. The community was looking to establish itself within intellectual circles and the middle class – sectors that were trying to form institutions embodying the newly manifesting democratic ideas in the post-authoritarian setting. The analysis in this section connects film culture – documentary film culture in particular – to socio-political institutions, arguing that in this early transitional period the conception of publicness and discussion of the public were mainly dominated by civil society organisations.

Chapter five focuses on FFD Yogyakarta. Held in Yogyakarta, a city 450 kilometres from the capital city of Jakarta, the festival has challenged the notion of film culture as centred in Jakarta and based on the idea of national unity to support national development. The chapter will discuss two ways in which the festival has opposed the 'national' film culture of the New Order.

First, the notion of 'independent' (also known colloquially as "indie") film is relevant, because the festival is self-sufficient and sometimes perceived as reliant on local sources, while in reality they depend on national and international partners. On one side this has challenged the dominance of the capital city Jakarta as the mainstay of the aesthetics of Indonesian cinema and film culture. But, on the other, this complicates the notion of local culture as totally independent from outside influences. The ability of the festival to connect to international filmmakers and partner organisations has also challenged Jakarta's position as the centre of film culture in Indonesia. The notion of local-national-international has been interlinked in this regard, raising the discussion about frictions happens in the formation of publicness in this documentary film culture in Indonesia.

Second, the festival has started a tradition of public talks and discussion after the first screening of each film. Inviting filmmakers, crew members, anthropologists, staff of civil society organisations or experts on particular topics to talk about the film and its subject matter is a significant change in film festival practice. It departs from the glamorous tradition of 'national celebrities' attending to talk about the film, while promoting media advocacy and the role of film in social and political change. This chapter argues that the festival has created counterpublic with the hep of its stakeholders in this particular documentary film culture. This counterpublic is made

by forming the public that ready to be engaged to social and political themes of the documentary in an interplay between multiple localities, from which a certain ephemeral space is formed for public affairs to be discussed.

Chapter six focuses on Watchdoc Documentary Maker, a production house that specialises in documentary film production. As a private company involved in campaigning for democracy and socio-economic justice, Watchdoc has posed questions about 'publicness' that relate to its institutional format. Such private entities are naturally regarded as profit-seeking, but Watchdoc has seized the civic roles that are usually played by NGOs and other civil society organisations.

Regarding documentary film culture, Watchdoc operates as an 'alternative media organisation' rather than an audio-visual service company, raising questions about the distribution channel for their product in the context of Indonesia's lack of infrastructure for this. Alternative channels have become the main mode of circulation for Watchdoc, and this chapter explores this phenomenon in relation to publicness by looking at a couple of important points. First, this chapter discusses screenings in non-theatrical spaces to emphasise exhibition practices that differ from those during the New Order regime and from the nostalgic screening practices of the urban middle class in the current cinema culture. These screenings are considered to be the site for the formation of publicness that imbued with sentiment and emotion, along with instigating experience of class-based position for urban poor in Jakarta. Second, international circulation of Watchdoc films and campaigns has taken the notion of publicness beyond national borders as part of a discussion on social justice on a global scale. This notion is not really new, as many films are being used in the meetings held by social reformers and non-government organisations, but

Watchdoc's screening could be regarded as important for its massive exposure that able to interlink the local struggle to the global public sphere of social movement.

The final chapter concludes with an exploration of the ideas of where this documentary culture, which contributes to the dialogue on publicness and the public, is heading. Through this chapter, I will argue for the importance of including various type of media engagements and documentary film production practices to produce subjectivity as well as emotion to form a variety of publicness in different institutional settings as well as aesthetic decisions.

Chapter 2
Literature review on publicness and the public

This chapter discusses the concept of publicness and its related terms to examine the way documentary film culture is instigating civic engagement and political participation in Indonesia. There is no term equivalent to 'public' in the Indonesian lingua franca, *Bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian Language) and it has been translated into '*publik*' with the definition provided by the official online dictionary issued Ministry of Education as: "people (common); everyone that comes (to watch, to visit, and others)" [1]. The dictionary does not offer any explanation or etymology. However, the term *publik* has become a popular parlance in post-New Order era as noted in a volume edited by an Indonesian scholar Budi Hardiman[2], and the etymology he uses is similar to the use of the term from the Greek era to the Enlightenment[3], implying the term has been adopted from its European use.

The term *publik* in Indonesian context has become a premise for pushing forward the reform agenda after the massive political change in 1998 where the authoritarian regime of the New Order was forced to step down by a student movement. To push for social and political reforms, the term has been particularly used in some laws that have been passed after 1998 such as the Broadcasting Law, which places much

---

[1] "*orang banyak (umum); semua orang yang datang (menonton, mengunjungi, dan sebagainya)"* See: "Publik," Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), accessed 10 October 2016, https://kbbi.web.id/publik.

[2] F. Budi Hardiman. *Ruang Publik: Melacak "Partisipasi Demokratis" dari Polis sampai Cyberspace. (Public Space: Tracing Democratic Participation from Polis to Cyberspace)*. (Jakarta: Kanisius, 2010), 2. (My translation)

[3] Hardiman, *Ruang Publik,* 3-10.

emphasis on 'public broadcast' and 'public domain'[4] to explain about radio and television frequency. It has also been used in the Public Information Law[5] and the Law on Public Service[6], which basically are meant to develop a new culture of accountability and good governance in bureaucracy.

The direct translation of the word 'public' into Bahasa Indonesia as '*publik'* tells an important fact that the term comes from different political traditions than the Indonesian tradition[7] and it might not be easy to grasp considering the vastness of Indonesia, a country with more than 250 million people, around 300 ethnic groups and more than 500 languages and dialects. Therefore, investigation of publicness in documentary film culture is a kind of journey through the tensions between a relatively 'foreign' concept and its local enactment. At the end of this journey this thesis expects to connect this term to the space that shapes and being shaped by it, particularly in documentary film narrative and practice in Indonesia.

To reach that objective, this chapter is organised into two section. In the first section, the concept of publicness in the existing literature is discussed according to my need to find an adequate framework for the investigation of the concept. The second section is the exploration of the ways the concept has been explored by many scholars in their research about Indonesia, especially in the fields related to political sciences, the media and film studies. In this second section those academic fields are

---

[4] See UU No.32 Republik Indonesia tahun 2002 tentang Penyiaran (Law No. 32 Republic of Indonesia, year 2002)

[5] UU No. 14 Republik Indonesia tahun 2008 tentang Keterbukaan Informasi Publik (Law No. 14 Republic of Indonesia, on year 2008 on Public Access to Information)

[6] UU No.25 Republik Indonesia tahun 2009 tenang Pelayanan Publik (Law No.25 Republik of Indonesia, year 2009 on Public Service)

[7] As also noted in Hardiman. *Ruang Publik*. 2-10.

not seen as separate one from another as it is impossible to put borders between them. Therefore, the approach in this thesis is multi-disciplinary to find how publicness emerged from a multitude of angles. Eventually, through this chapter, various types of publicness that emerged out of discussions about film cultures in Indonesia are elaborated on as the framework of my project.

Public sphere

The term 'public' in Western academic parlance has been around since the Enlightenment as an attempt to put the individual's political subjectivity not only in a context of collective life but also in reason-based deliberation and its justification in the context of a certain type of polity[8]. However, a notable concept that brought the discussion into the contemporary world is the idea of the bourgeois public sphere by Jürgen Habermas in his 1962 book, *Structural Transformation of Public Sphere* published in English in 1989[9], which is my starting point.

Habermas' work has put a spotlight on the public sphere and contributed significantly to the debate about the public, especially in regard to two main points[10]. First, in reconstructing the public sphere, Habermas' attempt has directed the attention to a fundamentally historical category, linking the formation of bourgeois

---

[8] Jostein Gripsrud, Hallvard Moe, Anders Molander and Graham Murdock, "Editor's Introduction", in *The Idea of the Public Sphere: A Reader* (ed.) Jostein Gripsrud, Hallvard Moe, Anders Molander and Graham Murdock, xiii-xiv. (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2010).

[9] Jürgen Habermas. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (translated by Thomas Burger with assistance of Frederick Lawrence). (Boston: MIT Press, 1989).

[10] Miriam Hansen, "Foreword", in Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere.* Trans. Peter Labanyi, Jamie Owen Daniel and Assenka Ossiloff (London: Verso, 2016), xxvi.

society under liberal capitalism. Second, Habermas' public sphere delineates the term public as the fourth term, distinct from the state, the marketplace and the intimate sphere of the family. These two contributions have broadened the discussion on political deliberation by considering the discursive arena where the state policy can be scrutinized or criticized[11].

Habermas' idea of the public sphere separates the cultural and the political public spheres, and it has given a strong basis for discursive practice in political deliberation, rather than defining politics narrowly as legislative processes[12]. Here, Habermas is seen to expand the idea of legitimation of democratic society as not limited to the voting process alone but rather in the broader sense of open and inclusive processes of deliberation and public involvement in debate and criticism of the government policies, as well as the entire deliberative system of governance[13]. This Habermasian model of the public sphere is commonly found in studies about political transition in Indonesia, especially in the topic of civil society and the media as an underpinning force for political transition.

This Habermasian public sphere is important as a starting point for discussion about publicness especially on the inclusion of mediated forms of communication as a model for the development of democracy. Furthermore, the translation of Habermas' key word in the book, '*öffentlichkeit',* into English is usually as the "public sphere". In commenting on this term, Jostein Gripsurd et.al. mention that this term should not be translated as 'publicity' to refer to an abstract concept because the other terms are

---

[11] Ibid.

[12] Habermas. *The Structural Transformation,* 89-102.

[13] See Nicholas Garnham, *The Media and the Public Sphere in Habermas and the Public Sphere* (ed.) Craig Calhoun (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1996), 359-361.

unable to grab Habermas' use of the term, *öffentlichkeit*[14]. According to these authors, the neologism was established by combining the adjective "*öffentlich*" (public) and the suffix "*-keit*" ("-ness") which transforms "*öffentlich*" into a noun that signifies the quality or state manifest in the adjective[15].

> …*öffentlichkeit* designates a sphere of open (public) spaces and communication where a public discourse on matters of common concern can take place and lead to the formation of an opinion on the part of the public of citizens that in turn may influence political decision making.[16]

This quote demonstrates the importance of the physical and historical aspect of the public sphere. Here, the public sphere is not merely the 'abstract space' of the media, but also about the ways discourses are entangled with the historical space in which they circulate. This flags an important aspect of media investigation, which always happens in the historicity of the space of its circulation, rather than merely as 'texts' or 'narrative'. It emphasises the effort to historicise such notion of interaction between a mediated form of communication and its concrete physical space of history, and even in the form of face-to-face interactions[17]. Those factors will be used as the starting point for the debate about the public in documentary film culture as my research object, especially since the latter refers to a particular format of media and its communicative capacity, including in site-specific situations. However, this chapter will continue by proposing some criticism of the Habermasian public sphere

---

[14] Gripsurd, et.al. "Foreword," xv.

[15] Grispurd. See also translator's note on Habermas book: Thomas Burger, "Translator's note" in Jurgen Habermas. *Structural Transformation of Public Sphere*, (Boston: MIT Press, 1989), xv.

[16] Gripsurd et.al. "Foreword," xv.

[17] Jurgen Habermas, *Structural Transformation,* 31-35

in order to seek alternatives and to find a stronger ground for the investigation of publicness in this project.

Counterpublics and the media

Habermas' idea of the public sphere is based on a rationalist model of public discourse and this makes it difficult to theorise a pluralist public sphere, where contesting political stances are severely divisive[18]. This idea of the public sphere has also been criticized as relying on the assumption of the "bracketing" of social and economic status as if the participants in the public sphere are equal[19]. Nancy Fraser counters Habermas' argument on the model of the Eighteenth Century public sphere by saying that that model did not exist in the form Habermas claims, and inequalities were still operating in the fabric of everyday habits. Deliberation and debates based on rational thinking belong to the bourgeois individualistic practices while other classes were not familiar with the habit, making them disadvantaged in such situations[20]. By scrutinizing this assumption, Fraser argues that the "bracketing" has covered up the actual operation of inequality within the public sphere.

Fraser then develops her idea of subaltern counterpublic spheres as one of the important alternatives to the bourgeois public sphere of Habermas. Fraser makes a distinction between stratified societies and un-stratified societies and this difference affects the formation of the public sphere. In stratified societies, Fraser believes that

---

[18] Garnham, "The Media", 361.

[19] Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy" in *Habermas and Public Sphere* (ed.) Craig Calhoun (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 123.

[20] *Ibid*.

competing publics will provide better chances for contestation among plurality rather than does a single and overarching public.[21] This happens because the arena where publicness is formed could not be sterilized from social inequalities that persist, and the result of deliberation will also be affected mostly in favour of the dominant group. Fraser does not believe in the single public sphere where the deliberation is advanced for the benefit of the common good. In stratified societies, deliberation is a zero sum game and contended among the groups within the society[22].

According to Fraser, the existence of a single and comprehensive public sphere, as Habermas theorized, will worsen the condition since the subgroup would have no arena for deliberation among themselves and communicative processes of these groups would happen under supervision of the dominant group. Therefore, the public sphere should be considered to be multiple, and Fraser suggests to call them subaltern counterpublics. These multiple counterpublics exist to

> …signal that they are parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs.[23]

Fraser also suggests that even in an egalitarian and un-stratified society, the public sphere cannot be seen as singular, since it is not culturally neutral[24]. For Fraser, public spheres are not only an arena for the formation of discursive opinion, but also for the formation and enactment of social identities. Therefore, participation in this regard should not be:

---

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] Fraser "Rethinking Public Sphere," 124.

[23] *Ibid*.

[24] *Ibid.*

> simply a matter of being able to state propositional contents that are neutral with respect to form of expression … but participation means being able to speak in one's own voice, and thereby simultaneously to construct and express one's cultural identity through idiom and style.[25]

Fraser's argument is very important to add the power factor and relation into Habermas' view of the public sphere. Rather than emphasizing the method of deliberation, in which differences between unequal publics are resolved through contest or other means, Fraser takes the contestation and competition among publics to be an important factor in asserting the multiplicity of the public sphere.

Fraser's argument on the public sphere suggests multiple spheres that represent different interests, including underprivileged groups. Rather than seeing this emerging element as already established common goods, as associated by Habermas with the bourgeoisie, Fraser sees the formation of public spheres as the contestation of different particular interests. However, the multiple public spheres asserted by Fraser remain posited in a rational model of politics, in which the subaltern counterpublics have their own rationality, and in the end, stay in the context of rational communication and political deliberation.

Publicness in this thesis will be understood as characteristics that emerge from the elements that constitute it, and the possibilities of these characteristics are dependent on those elements. Rather than merely relying on deliberation as argued by Habermas, I would like to explore other possibilities, such as alternative class-based experiences and affective individual positions. The emergence of these elements might provide an explanation for the type of publicness instigated by the

[25] Fraser "Rethinking Public Sphere," 126-127.

particular production, distribution and exhibition practices in documentary film in Indonesia revealed by my research.

Publicness in this regard is seen as a property that emerges from the formation of particular spaces and the social forces and media that occupy that space to produce engagements that lead to different possibilities. Publicness in this regard is to be seen as particulars rather than as a totality, and therefore its elements should be approached as contingent and ever-changing in unpredictable manners. Rather than seeing publicness as a model, it is then useful to bring forward the 'logic of assemblage'[26] to examine publicness as a social category based on particular ontology defined by the connectivity of its elements and particular characteristics that appear as those elements assemble.

Chris Berry in his examination of transnationalism brings the logic of assemblage from several authors such as Sassen, Ong and Delanda, who are trying to work on the idea of assemblage from Deleuze-Guattari. Rather than going through the concepts in detail, Berry brings in the logic of the social ontology as follows:

> the idea of the assemblage enables us to perceive an operating logic behind the superficially amorphous, chaotic and ever-changing characteristics of transnational cultural formations. Rather than only seeking out that which is fundamentally the same as themselves, they are radically open to connecting with that which is different, if it enables further growth, development and change.[27]

Based on this logic, publicness is not seen as a universal social category with similar fundamental characteristics. Instead, the idea of assemblage is brought as an

---

[26] Chris Berry, Transnational Culture in East Asia and the Logic of Assemblage", *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 41 (2013), 453–470.

[27] Ibid., 468.

intermediary to explain publicness as contingent, ever-changing, or even chaotic, and the emerging characteristics that come from it might be different from one situation to the next. This idea is very useful in avoiding the public sphere as a totality as asserted by Habermas, which is problematic because it does not provide alternatives for non-bourgeois iterations of politics. By using this logic of assemblage, this thesis will see publicness as something contingent, based on the elements that constitute it and resulted in different possibilities, and this will be explored through the works of ters such as Kluge and Negt, Hansen, Papacharissi and others.

Alexander Kluge and Oskar Negt also criticized the totality of public sphere as they propose the proletarian public sphere based on different logic from Habermas' bourgeois public sphere. Negt and Kluge in their book, *Public Sphere and Experience*, mention the exclusion of working class, or proletariat, as the Habermasian model relies on the bourgeoisie to make decisions in the totality of the public sphere[28]. Negt and Kluge develop their idea of the proletarian public sphere, with alternative media to instigate a model of subjectivity, as a kind of experience in the realm of socio-economic relations called "context of living" to resist the hegemonic model of bourgeois subjectivity[29]. Negt and Kluge propose the "proletarian public sphere" which is constructed based on the "social structure of production", where the experience of the working class is hindered by the bourgeois social arrangements, including where the Habermasian public sphere is located[30]. Therefore, they suggest examining the proletarian public sphere as a counterpublic to open the possibility of

[28] Oskar Negt and Alexandre Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere* (London: Verso, 2016), 28

[29] *Ibid*, 28-36.

[30] *Ibid,* 28.

the formation of a 'social horizon of experience'[31] that enables the working class to understand their class and social relation within the capitalist society.

Understanding of this class position is not necessarily revolutionary or leading to class confrontation, and this can happen to different types of underprivileged social category in the society. Basing her argument on cinema-going in America during the silent era, Miriam Hansen uses ideas from Negt and Kluge to develop her approach of non-bourgeois, "depoliticized" public sphere formation as a political space that leads to the formation of collective subjectivity[32]. In her study of early cinema, Hansen believes in the transformative roles of a medium –that comes with the space in which the medium circulates- in forming the social horizon, especially for female audiences, the marginalized and new migrant communities among the audience of the early cinema[33].

Early cinema was critical for groups of women, new immigrants and the recently urbanised working class that were barely capable of accessing the existing institutions of public life. Hansen takes a close observation of the possibilities of cinema in producing space and cultural accommodation of fantastical spaces that allowed these marginal groups within society to "organise their experience on the basis of their own context of living"[34]. Hansen's assertion does not necessarily mean the engagement with the cinema radicalized the audience. In Hansen's words:

---

[31] *Ibid*, 2.

[32] Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1991), 14

[33] *Ibid,* 107.

[34] *Ibid,* 108.

> …the cinema to some extent absorbed the functions of the utopian imagination, albeit in a diminished alienated and depoliticized form[35].

However, it is the circumstances of the temporal and spatial aspects of the exhibition and reception that are able to create new and critical possibilities for public life, and these will bring effects on the viewer where the situation of exhibition and reception would determine more than the film by itself[36]. So far, it is Hansen's work that resonates most with my research on publicness in documentary film culture in Indonesia. Hansen's idea of publicness is formed around media discourses and practices at the same time as she demonstrates the importance of the site of film circulation in which this publicness is formed. This publicness is also related to a form of a repressed subjectivity, which finds its articulation in the process of film exhibition practices. The publicness that she points out does not necessarily lead to political deliberation or radicalisation of that public. Rather, it enables the organising of the experience around the context of living that is linked to the publicness in question.

Hansen constructs her idea of media engagement from Negt and Kluge who are not championing deliberative politics but wish to assert a different type of experience-based subjectivity, to produce a 'social horizon', in which the proletariat class are able to understand themselves in their class position[37]. Based on different ways of seeing the structure of the public sphere, Negt and Kluge oppose Habermas' view of the media. For them, the bourgeois media seen by Habermas as bringing access to the public sphere do not have any interest in providing content that can

---

[35] *Ibid,* 112.

[36] *Ibid*, 93.

[37] *Ibid*, 12.

lead to creating awareness of class and social position on the part of the proletariat[38]. Therefore, alternative media should come into play in exposing the 'relationality' within the class structure and then alienating the individuals from daily experience under bourgeois social organisation to produce a different type of experience, which is called *Erfahrung*[39]. This type of experience, different than immediate experience, is regarded as the ramification of mediation for individual perception and the 'social horizon' of meaning, which includes the collective experience of alienation, isolation, and privatization[40]. Different than the 'subjectivity' that is considered to be pre-existing in much thought about the public sphere, Negt and Kluge have posited that such a transformative function of discursive practices does not rely on rational thinking that leads to public opinion – and then debate – on government policy, but rather on the construction of experience in the areas to be considered as the 'context of living' from which the proletariat are able to realise their class position especially to counter the hegemony of the bourgeois public sphere[41]. Miriam Hansen, as discussed above, uses a similar approach to Negt and Kluge in asserting her thoughts on the relationship between the public sphere and media. However, interestingly, Hansen includes the specificity of the cinema hall, an exhibition platform, as part of this formation of collective subjectivity and for the media to reach transformative potential[42].

---

[38] *Ibid.*

[39] *Ibid.*

[40] *Ibid.*

[41] Negt and Kluge, *Public Sphere*, 28

[42] Hansen, *Babel*, 93-95.

The media's transformative potentials are explored in relation to human rights-themed films and documentary films in general, especially in their ability to form 'witnessing publics' as the result of the interaction of media and their audiences. Taking ideas from the Christian ideology of 'witnessing', McLagan[43], and then Torchin, bring the possibility of the testimonial genre in human rights narratives that enables transformative experiences for viewers as it persuades and moves the audiences' sensibilities[44]. In McLagan's words:

> Testimonials are first-person narratives aimed at outsiders in which an individual's account of bodily suffering at the hands of oppressive governments or other agents comes to stand for the oppression of a group[45].

Particular narratives of testimonial human rights documentary are considered to sit in the space between personal stories and documentation[46]. Regardless of the inability of the audience to see directly the atrocities, testimonials given by victims or survivors work to put moral questions to the audience, asking them to give solidarity. The media narratives in this regard might be the significant part of the creation of such question, but what is important in this idea of 'witnessing' is the formation of a public who are willing to testify and build solidarity.

The formation of a 'witnessing public' is explained through testimony as 'speech act' that leads to changes that have transformative potential in the formation of a community that is ready to listen and respond to the narratives[47]. Testimony in

---

[43] Meg McLagan, "Principles, Publicity, and Politics: Notes on Human Rights Media" in *Visual Anthropology*, 105, No.3, 2003, 608.

[44] McLagan, "Principles", 607.

[45] *Ibid*.

[46] *Ibid*. 608

[47] Leshu Torchin, *Creating the Witness: Documenting Genocide on Film, Video, and the Internet*. (London and Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 4.

human rights narratives deals with attempts to create changes for causes beyond the screen, which are mostly related to ending human rights abuses. Such narratives ask the audience to take a similar position to the speaker, and then to establish a community conducive to listening and responding. In Torchin's words:

> Witnessing and testimony provide useful theoretical frameworks for understanding the work of film as producing information and transforming audiences. Historically understood as a truthful first-person narration of suffering to transform the world, testimony relates to the rhetorical efforts of film projects that portray distant atrocities with the intention of ending them. The term is probably most often associated with the courtroom wherein the person sworn in as witness testifies to an occurrence in order to bring about justice[48].

Torchin develops the idea of the formation of a community that is ready to respond to certain narratives in film programming in a documentary film festival. In the concept of testimony and encounter, Torchin talks about the "interface between the testimony of programmed films and the audiences" that forms the witnessing public, which is the "viewers who take responsibility for what they have seen and become ready to respond"[49]. Here, the formation of the 'witnessing public' does not depend solely on the narrative, but is expanded into media practices, such as distribution and most importantly, exhibition, which is very instructive to my project in looking at film festivals as part of the examination of publicness in Indonesian documentary film culture.

The role of Christian ideology in McLagan and Torchin's ideas on the formation of witnessing publics is important. However, a secular model of the

---

[48] Torchin, *Creating the Witness*, 5.

[49] Leshu Torchin, "Networked for Advocacy: Film Festivals and Activism," in Film *Festival Yearbook 4: Film Festival and Activism*, (eds.) Dina Iordanova and Leshu Torchin (St. Andrews: St. Andrews Film Studies, 2012), 2.

formation of politically-engaged publics akin to this 'witnessing public' is also proposed by Ariella Azoulay in her evocation of the 'civic skill' in looking at photographs of other people's catastrophes, which are inflicted by regimes in power[50]. In the context of the study of photographs in the Palestine and Israel, Azoulay sees this ability to look at these particular types of photograph is not merely an exercise of aesthetic appreciation. Rather the skill, is related to citizenship, as it is

> activated the moment one grasps that citizenship is not merely a status, a good, or a piece of private property possessed by the citizen, but rather a tool of a struggle or an obligation to others to struggle against injuries inflicted on those others, and noncitizen alike — others who are governed along with her[51].

Azoulay posits this civic skill in the particular situation of Israel, especially in the context of Israelis' and Palestinians' relationships to the state, because the state of Israel admits the citizenship of the former but somehow suspends the latter. Based on the capacity to develop this civic skill, then it is part of the citizen's duty to use the skill in the context of the state's governance. In other words, in the way of looking at the media, Azoulay posits the citizen's agency to build solidarity with others who are under repression or oppression. Regardless of the particularity of Azoulay's assertion, this civic skill is important in term of explaining the agency of individuals in looking at the media, especially in bearing possibility of the formation of media audiences engaged beyond aesthetic appreciation. This civic skill is one among many possibilities generated from media interaction, and within the formation of the 'witnessing public', affectual engagement could also emerge. This affectual engagement in the formation of public is a possibility I explore in the next section.

---

[50] Ariella Azoulay. *The Civil Contract of Photography*. (New York: Zone Books, 2008), 14.

[51] *Ibid*.

Publicness and emotion

In talking about engagement, Habermas' thinking about public sphere is based on reason in the context of the formation of public opinion and political deliberation. Meanwhile, Negt and Kluge and also Hansen connect media engagement to the realm of experience based on the 'context of living', which is the position of the subject based on class relations. Another type of engagement that might be useful to discuss with regard to publicness is the engagement based on sentiment and emotion.

In her research on political participation in the Arab Spring, Zizi Papacharissi suggests an affectual mode of civic engagement for her study on 'networked society', in which mediality, or how media engagement has been produced, could be regarded to happen in an affectual mode, and based on what she calls 'affectual rationality'[52]. Papacharissi suggests a totally different mode of engagement than what has been previously discussed in debates about the Habermasian public. As opposed to subjectivity and reason-based rationality formed around discourse, this approach has gone into an area with a totally different ground[53]. With this model, Papacharissi is trying to assert the role of different models for engagement to the media, including – as the subtitle of her book suggests – sentiment and emotion.

Papacharissi's research is basically about political participation through the social media platform, Twitter, but her study is important for not excluding the emotional aspect of media engagement, which is part of how people internalize and act on

[52] Zizi Papacharissi, *Affective Publics*, 11-12.

[53] *Ibid.*

everyday experiences[54]. In defining affect, Papacharissi takes the term from Deleuze and Guattari:

> …the ability to affect and be affected. It is a pre-personal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying augmentation or diminution in that body's capacity to act[55].

Papacharissi admits that this theory of affect is abstract and difficult to apply, and she tends not to differentiate between affect and emotion, which are two different concepts. Papacharissi then places this affectual mode of civic engagement in relation to a more flexible term, structure of feeling, which is a term coined by Raymond Williams[56]. In using this concept of the structure of feeling, Papacharissi highlights the affective element of the experience as not final as in any subjective or transcendental experience but closer to:

> …impulse, restraint and tone; specifically affective elements of consciousness and relationship: not feeling against thought; but thought as felt and feeling as thought: practical consciousness of a present kind, in a living and interrelated continuity.[57]

The ambiguity of this mode of experience is the main inspiration for Papacharissi to argue for the importance of the liminal nature of the affectual mode of engagement to be included in the analysis of the media. This network of experience contains both empowering and disempowering potential for those participating in them[58], affirming that this engagement is polysemous and open for a variety of possibilities.

---

[54] *Ibid.*

[55] Deleuze and Guattari in Papacharissi, *Affective Publics*. 13.

[56] Papacharissi, *Affective Publics*, 65.

[57] Williams as quoted in Papacharissi, *Affective Publics,* 116.

[58] Papacharissi, *Affective Publics,* 131

Another possibility to include emotion in the study of culture can also be found in the term 'public feeling' coined by Ann Cvetkovich in looking at the circulation of feelings and emotion in the public sphere. Cvetkovich's research is basically grounded in the personal aspect of publicness in identity politics[59]. Her study is a project to locate cultural expression of feelings that are stored beneath the surface, in repositories such as memoirs, and give it a place in the socio-political arrangement of the public sphere rather than allow it to be stigmatized as negative feelings[60]. Cvetkovich's study starts with trauma to find lesbian political subjectivities buried under trauma[61] and then moves into depression to study the personal expression of feelings in everyday situations that are marked by long histories of violence and social and political pressure[62]. Cvetkovich's idea of public feeling becomes the subject as well the method especially because it is the theme or content and at the same time a method to unearth something hidden.

As a project, public feeling is part of the affective turn in cultural criticism, "which has not only made emotion, feeling, and affect (and their differences) the object of scholarly inquiry but has also inspired new ways of doing criticism"[63]. The term affect is used in general terms in Cvetkovich's study that incorporates impulses, desires and feelings, which have been formed historically in various ways, both as particular forms of emotion and as categories that are frequently posed in opposition to

---

[59] Ann Cvetkovich, *Depression A Public Feeling* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 17.

[60] Cvetkovich, *Depression*, 3.

[61] Ann Cvetkovich, Archive of Feelings (Duke University Press), 7.

[62] Cvetkovich, *Depression*, 7.

[63] Cvetkovich, *Depression*, 3.

reason[64]. Feelings, which are totally outside the Habermasian model of the public sphere and are not included in the examination of the proletarian public sphere in Negt and Kluge, are given a place in socio-political arrangement, which for Cvetkovich is useful in building a comparative method of analysis to include grief, rage, hope and patience in the scholarly study of the political[65].

This idea of engagement provides possibilities for alternative narrative based on sentiment and feelings, and it is very important for my own research as it enables me to see culture as lived and open. The impact of this engagement can help sustain movements that "might yield political impact of a particular form, like a regime reversal, a call for elections, or a shift in the balance of power that may produce further legislative, social, economic, and cultural changes[66]".This is not implying that investigation of sentiment or the affective public is a thorough explanation of regime change in Indonesia. On the contrary, the potential that emerges from this engagement is highly contextual and should not be seen as fixed but can only observed at certain moments or under particular material conditions[67]. Therefore, my investigation of documentary culture in Indonesia is complimented by examination of feelings that have been unearthed by documentary films, either by the narrative or by its practices such as screenings, or by combinations of both.

---

[64] Cvetkovich, *Depression*, 4.

[65] Cvetkovich, *Depression,* 18.

[66] Papacharissi, *Affective Publics,* 132.

[67] *Ibid,* 16.

Publicness in scholarly research on Indonesia

How are the conceptions of publicness discussed in scholarly works about Indonesia? This section discusses some writings about publicness in various scholarly studies about Indonesia to find the way the concept has been elaborated in research in various disciplines, such as anthropology, political science, media studies and film studies. The discussion is not limited to works whose subject is film or film culture but also includes objects such as political institutions, civil society organisations, and the media among others to situate my own project in the previous scholarly discussion on publicness. The documentary film culture being investigated here is very much related to other social and political institutions, for example civil society organisations and the media as well as 'traditional' institutions in film such as censorship institutions (officials and unofficial such as pressure groups), production, and exhibition institutions. By situating my own approach in the existing works about these subjects, a more comprehensive understanding of publicness as observed by other scholars from various disciplines is expected to emerge, not limited to the ones whose object is film or film culture.

Publicness as a criterion to (partly) challenge the operation of absolute power has appeared in a study about the old Javanese Kingdom of Mataram, which existed from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, in a work by the Indonesian political scientist Soemarsaid Moertono. In his monograph published in 1963, *State and Statecraft in Old Java* Moertono explains about how kings legitimate and maintain their power through mostly "magico-religious" concepts of power[68]. The rulers using such models

[68] Soemarsaid Moertono, *State and Statecraft in Old Java: A Study of the Later Mataram Period, 16th to 19th Century*. (Singapore: Equinox, 2009), 2.

depend on divine legitimation rather than any popular support, making the position of the people rather insignificant[69].

However, there are two models of protest as a type of civic engagement to show public concerns that can be put before the authority. One is the custom of doing '*pepe'* (to sit in the full rays of the sun) in the great square in front of the king's palace so the king could see them, and this will disturb the king as this unruly behaviour from his people is viewed as disturbing the harmony that he must keep to maintain power[70]. The people will sit there until the king decides to hear their petition[71].

The second model of protest is a more general expression of public opinion in Javanese society through folk-humour expressed in the jokes of the jesters in Javanese shadow play puppets (*wayang kulit*) and shadow play theatre (*wayang orang*)[72]. This model is done because an open criticism of authority might lead to severe punishment of the protester. This humorous criticism did not get any warnings from the authority and Moertono explains this by implying a magical quality of any comedians as they impersonate ancestral figures to perform criticism[73].

Moertono's work mostly discusses the operation of the state, and his model of publicness has not been picked up by many political scientists[74]. Calling this mode of

---

[69] *Ibid*.

[70] *Ibid*.

[71] *Ibid*, 77.

[72] *Ibid*.

[73] *Ibid.*

[74] An American political scientist who specialises in Indonesia, R. William Liddle, has used Moertono's approach in seeing how Soeharto has managed to stand out as a leader of the 'Third World', asserting uniqueness of Indonesia as a case in comparative politics. See Liddle, "Relative autonomy of the Third World politician: Soeharto and Indonesian economic development in comparative perspective" in *International Studies Quarterly*, 35, No. 4. (1991): 403-427.

protest publicness might be anachronistic, but Moertono's work has already laid the ground for the study of public space (physical and mediated) from where resistance against authority might be possible even in an absolutist state. However, these models do not imply transfer of power to the public or regime change, because whether or not the king hears their protest is totally based on his discretion. Dissatisfaction about the king's decision never delegitimizes his authority since his rule is based on divine blessings[75].

An extensive study of publicness and public culture in general in Indonesia especially during the Soeharto administration – which called itself "New Order" – is provided by anthropologist Niels Mulder in his book about 'the culture of the public world in Indonesia[76]. In Mulder's view, the public world in Indonesia grows as an indication of the modernisation of the country, starting from the '*Kebangkitan Nasional*' or 'National Awakening'[77] period in 1908 under the Dutch colonial administration. During this period some civil association groups, political parties and the media were established[78], causing Mulder to suggest civil society had already formed at that time[79]. He then continues to observe the way a 'new nation' such as Indonesia undergoes processes to acquire political institutions such as constitutionalism, democracy, human rights and social justice in modern times –

---

[75] Moertono. *State and Statecraft*, 8.

[76] Niels Mulder. *Indonesian Images: The Culture of the Public World*. (Jakarta: Kanisius Publishing House, 2000)

[77] On the National Awakening see Akira Nagazumi. *The Dawn of Indonesian Nationalism: Early Years of Boedi Oetomo, 1908 – 1918.* (Tokyo: Institute of Developing Economies, 1972).

[78] Mulder. *Indonesian Images,* 14-24

[79] *Ibid.*

something that is taken for granted in the Western world[80]. Mulder's book elaborates some elements of public life that are considered to be the expression of civic culture. He explores a few elements such as civic education where he examines official student text books from elementary school to high school to seek conceptions of individuals, social life and other contents that are able to show Indonesian views of the public[81]. He also studies the roles of intellectuals, the media and some literary works that he considers invoking the living image of the public in Indonesia[82]. Focusing on this public world during the Soeharto administration, Mulder comes into conclusion that the public world he has observed was not strong enough to develop into civil society due to repression from the state and heavy ideologisation in text books[83]. The intellectuals as a political force have also been challenged by the rise of politicised Islam and the incorporation of this political force by the state, and for Mulder this does not help democracy[84]. Therefore, the formation of institutions such as rule of law, autonomous citizenship and effective public opinion were unimaginable[85].

The study of 'public image" in Mulder book is mostly an attempt to put a template of the 'public world' on Indonesia, discounting possibilities of expression closer to what happened on the ground. Some more studies of similar subjects, under different perspectives, have shown a relatively more empathetic approach in looking

---

[80] *Ibid,* 11.

[81] *Ibid,* 31-100.

[82] *Ibid,* 183.

[83] *Ibid,* 232.

[84] *Ibid.*

[85] *Ibid.*

at possibilities of socio-political transformation based on comparatively different criteria than Western democracy experiences. The next section will discuss them, especially socio-political institutions such as civil society organisations, and then move to the media. This section closes with reviewing scholarly works on film and then situates my own project among the existing studies.

The New Order and *Reformasi*

Before going through the idea of publicness and discussions about the public in Indonesia in various scholarly works, I would like to put this discussion into the context of *Reformasi*, which literally means reform, and was a student-led political movement in 1998 that brought down Soeharto, Indonesian president for 32 years and ruling in an authoritarian fashion. The resignation of Soeharto is considered to be an important breaking point in Indonesian politics as it has removed authoritarian politics and at the same time opened up the space for a democratization process to be started in Indonesia.

Soeharto obtained the presidential position after the failed coup attempt that took place in 1965. At dawn on the 1st of October 1965, several army generals were abducted from their houses and then killed in a field near the Indonesian air force headquarters in the outskirts of Jakarta. This move invited a counter-attack from the army – led by Soeharto – to dismantle the movement, led by Untung, a left-leaning mid-ranking army officer. Untung's movement was linked to the Indonesian Communist Party, (*Partai Komunis Indonesia* or PKI) one of the biggest communist parties in the world in the 1960s – even the largest outside the Soviet Union and

China at that time. On the morning of the 1st of October and the following days, Soeharto and an army special force raided the field near the air force headquarters to combat Untung and his troops. The combat was short and the air force troop was defeated by the army who were backed up by the Special Force[86]. The abduction of the generals and what followed incited retaliation against the PKI, which was alleged to be behind the venture. The political situation had already been very hostile even before the 1st of October abduction, especially between the members and supporters of the PKI and the members of Islamic groups such as *Nahdhatul Ulama* (NU) over the deadlock in the 1960s land reform programme[87]. This heated tension then erupted into violence against and killings of the members and supporter of the PKI, especially since the Islamic groups (and ultra nationalist groups such as Pemuda Pancasila in North Sumatra and nationalist youth in Bali) were supported, armed and trained by the military – especially the army's special force, Kopassus[88].

Unlawful killings then happened to members and supporters of the PKI and other left-leaning organisations. Some sources mention the victims reached hundreds of thousands if not a million[89], and thousands of others were imprisoned without trial. The targets of the killings were members and supporters of PKI and its affiliated

---

[86] Jess Melvin, "The Road to Genocide: Indonesian Military Planning to Seize State Power Prior to 1 October 1965", in (eds.) Katharine McGregor · Jess Melvin Annie Pohlman. *The Indonesian Genocide of 1965 Causes, Dynamics and Legacies* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2018), 51-70.

[87] See Margo Lyon, "Dasar-dasar Konflik di Daerah Pedesaan di Jawa" (Basis of Land Conflict in Rural Java) in Tjondronegoro, SMP and Gunawan Wiradi (eds.) *Dua Abad Penguasaan Tanah: Pola Penguasaan Tanah dari Masa ke Masa* (*Two Centuries of Land Tenure: Patterns of Centuries of Land Tenure*). (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1984), 202-286.

[88] Melvin, "The Road".

[89] See for example Robert Cribb, "Unresolved problems in the Indonesian killings 1965-1966" in *Asian Survey*, 42, No. 4 (2002), 550-563; also see for a thorough analysis in John Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder: The September 30th Movement and Suharto's Coup d'etat in Indonesia*. (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006).

organisations, left-leaning artists and intellectuals, and labour union activists. This created chaos, until Soeharto strongly urged the president at that time, Sukarno, to hand over authority to restore order, which Sukarno granted in March 1966[90].

The anti-communist massacre and unlawful mass incarceration have become the starting point and foundation of Soeharto's risie as president in Indonesia. He managed to obtain support from other anti-communist military officers, anti-communist intellectuals, religious – mostly Muslim – leaders, and students. Soeharto maintained this anti-communist sentiment, and then became the president of Indonesia after taking over from Sukarno. He was inaugurated in 1966, and then invited foreign investment into Indonesia and took some steps to recover the economy after the crisis that came along with the 1960s turmoil. Soeharto then named his era as the "New Order" (*Orde Baru*) to provide a firm sense of a break away from the period under the previous president, Sukarno, which was called the "Old Order" (*Orde Lama*). The name is selected to imply a new and different (and irreversible) direction compared to the "old" government that the nation must leave behind.

The breakaway from the "old order" and the extermination of communist and leftist movement in general became crucial to the state under Soeharto as he continued to rule Indonesia by the expansion of his anti-communist credentials[91]. The state ideology, Pancasila, which originated from a debate in the Indonesian

---

[90] Jess Melvin, *The Army and the Indonesian Genocide: Mechanics of Mass Murder* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 241-2.

[91] Ariel Heryanto "Where communism never dies: Violence, trauma and narration in the last Cold War capitalist authoritarian state" in *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 2, No. 2 (1999), 147-177.

constitutional assembly in the 1940s, then turned into a discourse to support developmentalism, a nationwide orchestrated effort to pursue economic growth that required political order through repressing political expression and curbing oppositions. Moreover, the anti-communist ideology was expanded into a nationwide terror through stigmatisation and violence against any opposition and dissenting voices making any protest, as a result of which they risked imprisonment or disfranchisement[92]. The regime was supported by the military, especially the army, building the main political block, where Soeharto distributed power among his trusted peers in the military without providing checks and balances throughout the state's institutions and at the same time led the industrialisation of the country together with newly established domestic conglomerates[93].

In term of political institutions, especially in the 1980s, Soeharto established a state akin to a corporatist state with a state-sanctioned organisation for each professional association, including for media and film-related professionals[94]. Any organisations established without the state's approval were banned and their leaders risked imprisonment. Political parties were streamlined, from 10 in 1971 to three, with one, *Golongan Karya*, became the regime's vehicle to win elections and provide legitimation of its power. The two other political parties were the result of the merger of several parties considered to be within similar strains of ideology: Islam and nationalism. The Islamic parties were merged into *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*

---

[92] Ariel Heryanto, *The State Terrorism and Political Identity in Indonesia: Fatally Belonging*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 33-61.

[93] Richard Robison. *Indonesia: The Rise of Capital* (Singapore: Equinox, 2009), 176-203.

[94] See Krishna Sen. *Indonesian Cinema: Framing New Order*. (London: Zed Books, 1994), 64-70.

(Unity and Development Party) or PPP, while the nationalist-leaning parties were merged into *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia* (Indonesian Democratic Party) or PDI. These two parties were tightly controlled and their chairpersons usually needed to be granted approval from Soeharto to curb any serious potential political oppositions coming from them. This created a political culture centred on Soeharto[95].

Oppositional and alternative voices started to be given little spaces in the 1990s, as the New Order regime started to face challenges from the global wave of democratization[96]. Many civil society groups, established in the 1980s as balancing voices to the development programmes, increased their critical voices in society regardless of the limits to the criticism they were able to make. Many have seen the situation of this 'quasi-opposition' as the basis for the further push to democracy within the New Order regime[97], as will be explained in the next section below. The final push that created a collapse of the New Order regime happened when Southeast Asia was hit by the financial crisis that started in 1997. It was started with the devaluation of the Thailand currency, the *baht*, and then shortly followed by the Indonesian *rupiah*. The rupiah fell from around 2,000 per US dollar, to around 10,000 per US dollar and plunged even further to around 15,000[98]. This contributed

---

[95] See Stefan Elkof. *Power and Political Culture in Suharto's Indonesia: The Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) and Decline of the New Order (1986–98)*. (Copenhagen: Nias Press, 2003), 23-42.

[96] Anders Uhlin. *Indonesia and "Third Wave of Democratization": The Indonesia Pro-Democracy Movement in a Changing World*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 1-24.

[97] A scholar such as Hadiwinata even argues that the existence of civil society organisations in the 1980s, and especially in the 1990s, had enabled the general public to maintain public imagination of politics beyond Soeharto. See Bob Hadiwinata, *Politics of NGOs in Indonesia: Developing Democracy and Managing a Movement.* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2003), 3-4., and this is also discussed in the next section below.

[98] Thomas Pepinsky. *Economic Crises and the Breakdown of Authoritarian Regimes Indonesia and Malaysia in Comparative Perspective.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 106.

significantly to general dissatisfaction among the public. This crisis made the country go through structural adjustment and this caused the collapse of the authoritarian regime[99].

The general dissatisfaction turned into something different altogether when the students decided to stage protests against Soeharto and the regime at large. The protests were described as the culmination of the lack of trust in the political elites and the state in general, where the students took to the streets and expressed their demands for across-the-board changes to the entire system[100]. Incrementally, the protest was named *Reformasi*, which literally means reform, expressed as opposition to three things considered to be damaging the country: *korupsi, kolusi dan nepotisme* (corruption, collusion and nepotism) or KKN. This slogan of anti-KKN then accelerated the protest, which started on the streets of Yogyakarta, into a nationwide protest led by students. At the peak of the protest on the 13th of May 1998, four students of the University of Trisakti, Jakarta, were shot dead in the front yard of their campus, and this led to riots in two cities: Jakarta and Solo. The riots lasted for two days, the 13th to 14th of May 1998. This riot deepened the political crisis and strengthened the protest movement. Students started to occupy the parliament building, demanding Soeharto to step down and *Reformasi* to be carried out immediately. Soeharto then took the last resort to salvage the situation by asking some political and religious leaders to establish a reform committee for transitioning the country to a new leader. This effort failed as nobody was willing to be installed in the committee because the demand had been clear: Soeharto to step down. Finally on the morning of the 21st of

[99] Pepinsky, *Economic*., 155-190.

[100] *Ibid*.

May 1998, Soeharto made a televised speech declaring his resignation from the presidency and then handed over the presidential position to the vice president, an aeronautics expert, BJ Habibie. Habibie was then inaugurated as Indonesian president to replace Soeharto. The inauguration incited resistance from some parts of the student movement, because Habibie was considered to be Soeharto's prodigy, and he could not be separated from the New Order, because he had been a minister five consecutive times under Soeharto's presidency. However, the effort to topple Habibie never gained a momentum, until his accountability speech was rejected by the Extraordinary General Assembly (*Sidang Istimewa MPR*) in October 1999. Habibie then lost his support to run for presidency for the upcoming election. After preparing the election of 1999, and freeing the media from the New Order's strict regulation (also to give a chance for East Timor to hold a referendum) Habibie stepped down from his presidency and then the general election of 1999 followed.

Reformasi in 1998 and beyond will be the focus of my thesis, because this moment has provided much change in social and political institutions in Indonesia, especially in the media world. Moreover, Reformasi has provided a strong ground for civil society and government institutions to install new legislation and public institutions that promote and use the idea of the 'public' as the ground to push for progress in politics and beyond, as explained at the beginning of this chapter.

Civil society organisations in Indonesia

There has been a thick body of scholarship on civil society and its role in pushing for democratisation in Indonesia. These studies mostly do not make any claim that

civil society organisations are solely responsible for the demise of the authoritarian New Order regime, nor do they assert that their role has been the most significant. Mostly, these works assert the long history of resistance and the efforts to keep check and balance mechanism to the state in the public sphere, including the pressure that comes from Islamic groups. The study on civil society in Indonesia mostly comes from the idea of the Habermasian public sphere, where there is some kind of socio-political space from which a democratic polity can be established, separately from the state. The studies are then directed to civil society groups, such as intellectuals and non-government organisations. Included in this strand is the role of civil society groups inspired by particular interpretations of Islamic teachings that have strong affinity with democracy.

Anders Uhlin in his book, *Indonesia and The Third Wave of Democratisation* has stressed the emergence of civil society in Indonesia, especially because of the global development of democratisation and the transnationalisation of the civil society movement[101]. Taking inspiration from Samuel P. Huntington's idea of the "Third Wave" of democratisation, Swedish political scientist Uhlin asserts the coming together of the existing civil society groups with the new idea of democratisation that happened globally. Uhlin does not mention civil society as the only or the strongest force to push for reform, but, when a region is undergoing a process of democratisation, he proposes the idea of "democratic diffusion" from which

[101] Anders Uhlin. *Indonesia and "Third Wave of Democratization": The Indonesia Pro-Democracy Movement in a Changing World*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997).

democratic ideas and encouragement for change travel, and this has bolstered the civil society groups in Indonesia[102].

Edward Aspinall in his study about political opposition in Indonesia has taken from Uhlin the term "*keterbukaan*" (openness) that blossomed in the 1990s as the ramification of multiple factors. Aspinall points out internal factors such as friction in the elite that support the regime, and the influence of the wave of democratisation that happened in Latin American countries[103]. This limited openness has enabled the civil society groups to get momentum in the public sphere regardless of heavy pressure from the Soeharto regime. Aspinall suggests the existence of this public sphere is "located between private or family life and the state"[104] and where civil society groups manage to be formed regardless of pressure from the regime. Rather than seeing the New Order as a regime that ruled with centralised violence and oppression of its citizens, Aspinall sees the way it ruled as a combination of 'repression and toleration, coercion and co-optation', making it possible for the formation of civil society groups, which he calls a 'proto-opposition' in the New Order state[105]. The proto-opposition took many forms, including civil society organisations such as non-government organisations (NGOs) who did not target any position in public office but had been trying to "seek from the state concessions, benefits, policy changes, relief, redress or accountability"[106].

---

[102] Anders Uhlin, "Transnational Democratic Diffusion and Indonesian Democracy Discourse" in *Third World Quarterly*, 14, No.3, (1993), 521-2.

[103] Edward Aspinall, *Opposing Suharto: Compromise, Resistance, and Regime Change in Indonesia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 16-18.

[104] Aspinall, *Opposing Suharto,* 89.

[105] *Ibid,* 8.

[106] Larry Diamond quoted in Aspinall, *Opposing Soeharto*, 9

The ventures of these organisations were partial and limited, and they maintained their independent position from the state while promoting particular policy reforms rather than promoting total regime change[107]. The main character of these groups was promoting incremental change rather than confrontation with the regime, therefore they were quite appealing as alternative sites for middle-class activists, whose view was to provide a platform for policy reform beyond any social boundaries such as ethnicity and class[108]. However, Aspinall suggests that the most important role that NGOs played in the New Order era "was encouraging a new kind of political imagining which, in contrast to the New Order's emphasis on state guidance and control, promoted societal self-reliance and popular participation"[109]. This view of the NGO is important for my study, especially because intersection between film communities and NGOs becomes the main point where documentary film culture is formed.

Another important work on civil society comes from anthropologist Robert Hefner, which explains the rise 'civil Islam', a social category that is a "democratic, religiously ecumenical, and boldly reformist movement in Indonesian Islam in the 1980s and 1990s" that repudiates the Islamic state and implementation of *Shariah* (Islamic law), while it "promotes women's rights, inter-faith dialogues and the struggle to create a democratic and pluralist polity[110]. In his book, Hefner consider "Muslim politics" as any kind of political actions based on a person conviction's as a

---

[107] Aspinall, *Opposing Soeharto,* 9.

[108] *Ibid,* 87.

[109] *Ibid.*

[110] Robert Hefner. *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratisation in Indonesia*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), xvii-xviii.

Muslim, whether or not the resulting behaviour embraces the idea of an "Islamic" state"[111]. This democratic Islam, for Hefner, embraces the idea of strong civic association to provide balance checks to the government[112].

Hefner's approach is an assertion of the plurality of Islam in Indonesia, and Hefner's book is a social anthropology study to locate the potential of Islam – as an ethical foundation in Indonesia – to support democratic politics. This view challenges directly Mulder's assertion about the position of Islam as political force to be inimical to democracy, according to which the incorporation of it into the state can only mean harming public culture. However, this study should be placed in a bigger discussion about Islam and politics in Indonesia as this issue keeps recurring – if not dominating – in discussion about democracy and politics in Indonesia[113]. This is relatively consistent with the premise of "half-hearted secularisation of Indonesia"[114] as part of historical experience, in which religions, mostly Islam, always comes to the fore during electoral periods and some crucial historical events.

However, this optimistic view of civil society and its organisational forms is challenged by the rise of '(un)civil society'[115]. The public sphere that opened after the

---

[111] Hefner. *Civil Islam,* xix.

[112] *Ibid,* 13.

[113] Hefner's claim on the affinity of Islam to democracy has been echoed by many other studies. In fact, there has been rich body of scholarship studies on the subject of Islam and modern democracy in Indonesia, not only to assert the plurality of Muslims in Indonesia (that is, not all political Muslims aspire to an Islamic state) but also to bring to the fore the potential of practices of Islam that support the prevalence of democratic ideals. An example in this strand is Carrol Kersten, *Islam in Indonesia: The Contest for Society, Ideas and Values*, Greg Barton. *Abdurrahman Wahid: Muslim Democrat, Indonesian President*.

[114] Irsyad Zamjani, *Sekularisasi Setengah Hati: Politik Islam Indonesia dalam Periode Formatif (Half-hearted Secularisation: Politics of Islam in Indonesia in Formative Period).* (Jakarta: Dian Rakyat, 2009). (My translation).

[115] Verena Beittinger-Lee. *(Un)civil Society and Political Change in Indonesia.* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

reform is also occupied by actors and groups whose interests are detrimental to the development of democracy, and they have been using the opportunity for their own interests. Verena Beittinger-Lee asserts a setback in the political transition, mainly due to the "failing of state functions" that enables these groups to grow[116]. In her book, Beittinger-Lee reminds us of the fact that limiting the study only to the non-violent actors that fit into democratic ideals is an exclusion of "a substantial and influential part of associational life" and might misrepresent civil society in Indonesia[117]. These "(un)civil" groups are rooted in organised thugs and criminals who take advantage from the state of 'illegality' in Indonesia[118] where state apparatuses are to some extent defying the rule of law and involved in corruption, to somehow establish mutual benefit with these groups. Beittinger-Lee categorises these groups into four different categories, which are: state or military proxies; groups utilizing state weakness; actors and groups antagonistic to liberal states; and terrorist groups who she considers as outside the state and its rules[119].

Beittinger-Lee's study does not take the public sphere for granted, as it has always been dependent on who take the dominant or hegemonic positions, and considering that not all the actors and their interests are supportive of democracy. Beittinger-Lee's work is basically a criticism of the neoliberal approach in looking at civil society to be taken for granted as a neutral ground[120]. In this study, Beittinger-Lee is appealing for attention to the groups (mostly religious-based and ethnic-based)

---

[116] *Ibid*, 3.

[117] *Ibid*, 4.

[118] Edward Aspinall and Geert Arend Van. Klinken, *The State and Illegality in Indonesia* (KITLV Press, 2011).

[119] Beittinger-Lee, *(Un)civil Society*,160-61.

[120] *Ibid*, 6.

that pose threats to democracy, including the ones that disregard minority rights and express their interests with violence and brute force[121].

The media

Study of the role of the media in political transformation and publicness can be found in Sen and Hill's book, *Media, Culture and Politics in Indonesia.* The book is the result of six months of fieldwork to investigate different types of media (books, the press, radio, television, cinema, music and the internet) at the end of the New Order era. But the book was published in 2000, making the book "more historical and less engaged with day-to-day reading of the event and media during the fieldwork"[122]. However, these scholars have been known for their research on Indonesian media[123], and this particular book could be regarded as part of their oeuvre in investigating the media and its entanglement in culture and politics in the country.

Sen and Hill suggest the role of the state in controlling media, through ownership and regulation[124]. However, both researchers have seen the possibility of media to pose challenges to the authoritarian regime, sometimes through what they call 'escape routes' which came not only from consciousness to instigate resistance but

---

[121] *Ibid*, 160.

[122] Krishna Sen and David Hill. *Media, Culture and Politics in Indonesia*. (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2.

[123] Sen is known for her seminal but very important book on Indonesian cinema, while Hill is known for his long and thorough observation on the history of the press in Indonesia.

[124] Sen's book on film asserts on much stronger control of the state on film. This will be elaborated separately later as this book has been a vital reference for many researchers on Indonesian cinema that have followed.

also from bureaucratic inefficiency[125]. They show this by examples from radio stations in Indonesia who managed to escape from the state's regulation against broadcasting any news[126]. Private radio stations were not allowed to produce and broadcast their own news during the New Order except for traffic reports and relaying news from the state-owned radio station, the RRI. However, during the period of limited openness as mentioned by Aspinall above, radio stations started indirectly reporting news from public occasions such as traffic jams caused by public gatherings or public demonstrations, and with it conveying what had been said in the demonstration, which was mostly political messages. This strategy has made the radio stations indirectly broadcast political news. A similar tactic was also used by broadcasters in talk shows where some sensitive subjects such as regime change managed to get on the air[127]. By mid-1996, many radio stations have already broadcast news without the state being able to restrict them as before[128]. This example has demonstrated the important agency of the media despite political pressure from the regime, which might lead to bigger change in the country.

Edwin Jurriens in his research about radio stations and *Reformasi* in Indonesia also recognises the role of radio stations as described by Sen and Hill. In Jurriens' book, 'publicness' becomes the central concept to explain about different public culture in the Indonesian public sphere[129]. In his research, Jurriens calls this

---

[125] Sen and Hill, *Media, Culture,* 2.

[126] *Ibid*, 96-100.

[127] *Ibid,* 100

[128] *Ibid,* 99-100. Another scholar, Edwin Jurriens also mentions similar thing in his research on radio and reformasi in Indonesia.

[129] Edwin Jurriens. *From Monologue"*.

publicness as "a value rather than media category"[130] to explain about the role of radio stations in inseminating the culture of dialogue, as opposed to the culture of monologue that had been imposed by the RRI during the New Order. Deriving the idea of publicness from Habermas' idea of the public sphere, Jurriens emphasises two main points on his discussion about publicness. First, he emphasises publicness – in its variety of terms – has been much discussed in post 1998 Indonesia "when the space for society to express itself in public expanded dramatically"[131]. Here, publicness as an idea has been equated with openness that comes after to the fall of the authoritarian regime and treated as a strategy by Indonesian academics and intellectuals to maintain the space for democratic politics in the post-authoritarian setting. Second, Jurriens then applies publicness as a value that ideally could be maintained by media organisations despite lamentations from Habermas on the 're-feudalisation of public sphere'. Refeudalisation here means that state and civil society are no longer distinct, but have become interlocked, with the state penetrating the private realm on the one hand and private organizations assuming public power on the other[132]. Publicness as a value, for Jurriens, works as a prerequisite for dialogue to happen and various attempts have been made to keep this value intact within the media organisations. Jurriens' main argument has been a refutation of the fear of 'refeudalisation' by showing the capability of private radio stations to maintain this publicness to foster the culture of dialogue. Jurriens' study is very useful for my own research, which also discusses publicness as a set of values and types of engagement generated by documentary film culture. However, Jurriens' research does not include

[130] *Ibid,* 25.

[131] *Ibid.*

[132] *Ibid,* 30.

the publicness as site-specific engagement, as his study is based on radio stations and media organisations, while my research includes site-specific media consumption that enables the possibilities of the emergence of publicness.

Film and public

The term 'public' has never been a key theme in scholarly publications about Indonesian film. However, many books written about film are related to its social and political context and its institutions (production, circulation and exhibition), which give me good references about film's position in the socio-political arrangement of Indonesian society. During the New Order era there were only a few scholarly studies about Indonesian films. Here, three main books published in the 1990s about Indonesian film will be discussed: *Shadows of The Silver Screen* by Salim Said, *Indonesian Cinema: National Culture on Screen* by Karl G. Heider and *Indonesian Cinema: Framing the New Order by Krishna Sen*. From these three books some ideas regarding film and its social context will be derived, before this chapter moves on to research about film in the post-1998 era.

Journalist and film critic Salim Said published his book in 1991, based on his thesis published in 1977. The main concern of his book is the quality of Indonesian films, which he considers as produced to copy "second-rate imported films"[133]. This low-quality aesthetic has become Said's concern, because it does not represent "the Indonesian face" and is detached from reality as experienced by Indonesians[134]. Said

[133] Salim Said, *Shadow of Silver Screen: A Social History of Indonesian Film* (Jakarta: Lontar Foundation, 1991), xi.

[134] *Ibid,* 3.

then links this aesthetic problem to the sociological basis for film production, which was the background of the filmmakers (producers and directors) who make them. This becomes the starting point for Said's main argument on the division of low-quality and high-quality films that appeared in Indonesia at that time. He pointed out two production models: the commercial model where film production was targeted to gain maximum profit on one side, and the artistic model which was based on the "desire for self-expression"[135] on the other. Said disparages commercial films made by Indonesian filmmakers of Chinese origins[136] and on the other side praises filmmakers whose films he considers to reflect the 'true face' of Indonesians and should be categorized as part of a cinema movement aimed at intellectuals[137]. Said considers this latter category as 'idealists' who see film as capable of educating the masses[138] and trying "to express themselves through the portrayal of problems faced" by their countries[139].

Another work published during the Soeharto era is from Karl G. Heider,[140] an anthropologist of University of South Carolina that approaches films as 'cultural artefacts' to provide insights on Indonesian culture in general. Contrary to Said, Heider does not dismiss the 'commercial films' for not representing the real face of Indonesia. Rather, Heider takes the side of these popular entertainments and advocates the position of convention and genre as the analytical units to examine

---

[135] *Ibid*, 6.

[136] *Ibid*.

[137] *Ibid*, 7.

[138] *Ibid*, 35.

[139] *Ibid*, 6-7.

[140] Karl G. Heider, *Indonesian Cinema: National Culture on Screen* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991).

Indonesian cinema and understand how they represent Indonesian culture[141]. Heider identifies the local specificity of conventions and certain genre to be typical to Indonesian films[142]. Heider's approach does not provide any way of film engaging to the audience apart from his conviction that the films reflect the culture of the nation. He does not see structural relations in the film production and circulation, and the linkages between aesthetics and socio-political settings except from his view that cinema is based in the language of Indonesians and possibilities to develop tactics to avoid norms by speaking in an indirect manner[143]. The problem of power relations in Indonesian film is the main focus of, arguably, the most important work on Indonesian cinema which also explains about New Order politics, written by an Australian scholar, Krishna Sen.

Krishna Sen's book, *Indonesian Cinema: Framing the New Order*[144] is a book about textual practices and institutions of Indonesian cinema since 1965 to describe how the institutions came into being and "how they operate to produce a particular kind of text with its particular discursive construction in Indonesia[145]." For Sen, it is impossible to understand film narrative in Indonesia separately from the social and political structure that produced them. Sen explores the social and political relations in Indonesia surrounding film production, distribution, exhibition and consumption to go beyond the text and reveal the power relations in the formation of the modern state of Indonesia, centred on the state and the way its apparatus created an

---

[141] *Ibid*, 6.

[142] See the exploration of genre and cinematic convention of Indonesian film in *Ibid*, 39-70.

[143] *Ibid,* 31-36.

[144] Kirshna Sen, *Indonesian Cinema: Framing the New Order* (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1994).

[145] *Ibid*, 1.

environment to make Indonesian film part of the political tools to govern the society[146].

In this light, Sen looks at Indonesian film culture as part of the capitalist class formation of the New Order Indonesian state, where the military-led administration played an overarching role in orchestrating the formation of the bourgeoisie and incorporation and reorganisation of social and political institutions to become part of the state's agencies[147]. The institutional and discursive practices revolving around film can only be understood within the perspective of the formation of the modern Indonesian state. In looking at this formation, Sen traces the process of the rearrangement of social and political life in 1960s Indonesia where radical politics, especially from the leftist political party and radical political movement, was being eliminated from the nation's culture and politics, along with the destruction of the Indonesian Communist Party and the massacre of its members and sympathizers in 1965-66[148]. This elimination included the ban and purging of leftist artists' works, and the institutions that supported them, leaving the New Order state sterile from any radical challenges, especially from the leftist movement which was the strongest alternative to the nationalistic state ideology[149].

---

[146] *Ibid*, 6.

[147] *Ibid*, 79-103.

[148] *Ibid*, 6.

[149] Sen, *Indonesian Cinema*, 50. This idea has been explored extensively by Ariel Heryanto in his research on the antagonism of Islamic aesthetics and (the absence of) leftist aesthetics as a contender to the trend of mainstreaming Islam in Indonesian cinema since 2008. He mentioned the role of a documentary film, *The Act of Killing*, in breaking this impasse at least in how study of Indonesian political history should be made. This will be explained later in this sub-section.

In her book, Sen explains how film institutions during the New Order became incorporated into the state because of fear and conformism, making the state able to control film production and circulation without any challenges[150]. Censorship was conducted on various levels. For example, to produce a film, filmmakers had to ask government approval of the film script before the shooting starts[151]. Film texts were regarded as rigidly controlled by the state to serve the purpose of seeking the national legitimacy of the New Order state (and its ideology). At the centre of this ideology, films were also used as propaganda towards the position of the New Order leader, Soeharto, as the 'father of the nation' in a patriarchal Indonesian society and to promote a modern archetype of Indonesians who conform and promote national ideology[152].

Sen's work is very important to shed light on Indonesian cinema in the context of the formation of the modern nation-state of Indonesia. Sen also reminds us of the Third Cinema approach as the basis for understanding the lack of resistance coming from Indonesian filmmakers towards the political establishment. The elimination of the leftists and artists with critical views from the country, and also all types of radical politics[153], made alternatives to state domination non-existent, and many

---

[150] Sen, *Indonesian Cinema*, 51-75.

[151] *Ibid*, 66.

[152] *Ibid*, 101-103.

[153] Katherine McGregor sees the expansion of the purge against the communists to other types of radical politics, including radical Islamists during the 1980's, where the capitalistic state of the New Order was at its peak in campaigning for Pancasila (Five Principles, the state ideology) as the sole official ideology for all organisations in the country. See Katherine E. McGregor, *History in Uniform: Military Ideology and the Construction of Indonesia's Past* (Singapore: ASAA Southeast Asia Publications Series and National University Press, 2007).

intellectuals and filmmakers became an indirect part of state apparatus or conformed to the state project of ideologisation.

Sen's works are written to explain cinema in the New Order era (1966-1998) and its social and political settings, in which the state, led by General Soeharto, was ubiquitous, influencing many aspects of life, including media production, distribution, and exhibition. Regardless of the absence of the New Order state in the post-1998 political setting[154], Sen's work remains a starting point for almost any scholarly work on Indonesian cinema and is still referred to as one of the important works for observing the position of Indonesian film in the changing political and cultural circumstances.

Another important work for my research is the work of Katinka van Heeren, who did her research in the early years after *Reformasi*. In studying Indonesian cinema, Katinka Van Heeren explores the possibility of transition from the New Order state into post-authoritarianism, examining film as a social practice against the backdrop of the changing political and cultural circumstances in Indonesia[155]. Van Heeren focuses on what she called as 'mediation practices' in various forms of representations and imagination of communities. She defines mediation practices as practices of film production, distribution, exhibition and consumption[156]. Van Heeren points to the

---

[154] Thomas Barker (2011) has asserted the irrelevance of Sen's work in examining the circumstances around the film industry in contemporary Indonesia, because Sen's work framed around the New Order state (as the subtitle of Sen's book, 'Framing the New Order'), whilst Heryanto (2014) insists on the continuing relevance of Sen's argument on the treatment over the Chinese minorities in the Indonesian film industry as part of the ethnic erasure in the official history of Indonesia. See also Said's work (1991) discussed in the beginning of this chapter.

[155] Katinka Van Heeren, *Contemporary Indonesian Film: Spirits of Reform and Ghosts from the Past* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2012).

[156] *Ibid*, 3.

'digital revolution' as the mainstay for the changes in 'mediation practices' that enable aspiring filmmakers to make films with the attitude of 'just do it', which was used to encourage filmmakers to start making their own films[157]. The availability of affordable recording equipment, especially among the middle class in Indonesia, has 'democratised' such practices.

This democratisation, however unequal in its manifestations, has made possible the development of many film communities, mostly in major cities, but also in smaller cities at the district level[158]. These communities are the crux of the group who were working to change what mediation practices from the New Order practices, by providing an 'alternative' to the mainstream film industry, mostly in production and exhibition. This happened shortly before and during the transitional period of *Reformasi* that she defines as the period where "slogans to demand politics, economics and legislation reform reigned supreme"[159].

In this account, Van Heeren links the rise of the alternative and 'independent film' movement in Indonesia shortly after the 1998 political change to the concept of Third Cinema as the oppositional mode of film institutions (especially distribution and exhibition) to confront the hegemonic relations that exist within the 'mainstream institutions', which she equates with the Hollywood system[160]. Here Van Heeren touches the potential of cinema and its practitioners to negotiate with the state and create their own space for transformation, which enables them to produce and

---

[157] *Ibid*, 5.

[158] *Ibid*, 65-66.

[159] *Ibid*, 8.

[160] *Ibid*, 65.

circulate films with more freedom. Van Heeren did her research mostly in the time when the political reform had just finished its highest momentum and the film communities had just surfaced from their underground status to create more than minimum space for production and distribution. This observation is important in seeing the actors as part of transforming the 'space' in which cinema culture is able to grow.

Intan Paramaditha elaborates more on that 'space' in her PhD thesis from New York University[161]. Paramaditha's research focuses on 'cultural producers', the new generation of film "directors, producers, scriptwriters, festival organisers, programmers and activists who have revived Indonesian cinema through film practices animated by the independent spirit that allowed them to speak of their generation's concerns"[162]. This 'new generation' of cultural producers were twenty to thirty years of age during the authoritarian regime and they created their early works shortly before the transition. Paramaditha places them as part of a bigger and more significant group of producers of a relatively new culture involving many ways of artistic expressions. More than exploring their own interests, these filmmakers, for Paramaditha, work on new aesthetics, and have been involved in political struggle in an unruly manner, hence she calls them 'wild children' as an expression of DIY with a rebellious attitude in the post-authoritarian setting[163]. These filmmakers had just been freed from the state's regulations on filmmaking, which involved a long apprenticeship before being a film director, they then expanded this momentum into

[161] Intan Paramaditha, "The Wild Child's Desire: Cinema, Sexual Politics, and the Experimental Nation in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia," (PhD thesis, New York University, 2014),

[162] *Ibid*, 3.

[163] *Ibid*, 73.

the total reform of the film industry by staging a protest against the oldest film festival in Indonesia, the FFI, and then going to court asking for revocation of censorship articles in the film law in 2007[164].

This move, and some other activities are important in the context of opening up the 'space' beyond filmmakers' interests, since these experiments have affinity to the public's need to institutionalise the *Reformasi*[165]. Aesthetically, these filmmakers have also brought along important approaches related to the public discourse on sexuality. Inspired by Sen's assertion on the patriarchal and militaristic state of the New Order, Paramaditha highlights the importance of politics of identity – especially related to the expression of sexuality – that has been brought by the new generation of filmmakers. Sexual politics for Paramaditha is in the centre stage of Indonesian politics, especially during the transition, and these filmmakers, along with some other activists, have been in the forefront of politics in advocating a wider space for non-normative gender and sexual expression. Paramaditha is one among the few who started to oscillate between the aesthetics and institutional in looking at the entanglement of film and politics and the transformative capacity of film, in this way contributing to the dialog about the public culture at large.

Another important work that is looking for the progressive potential of cinema is Budi Irawanto's PhD thesis at the University of Singapore[166]. Irawanto is a lecturer in communication studies at University of Yogyakarta and the festival director of Jogja

---

[164] *Ibid*, 100-110.

[165] *Ibid*, 73-75.

[166] Budi Irawanto. "Emancipating Desire, Empowering Fantasy: Cultural Politics of Contemporary Cinema in Indonesia and Malaysia," (PhD thesis, National University of Singapore, 2014)

Netpac Film Festival (JAFF), one of the most prominent film festivals in the country. He also known as a film critic and scholar who has been actively promoting Asian cinema, in particular Southeast Asian Cinema, with NETPAC, The Network of Asian Cinema.

In his thesis, Irawanto compares cultural policy in Indonesia and Malaysia with a method that he calls 'inter-referencing', to place Southeast Asian cinema as part of world cinema[167]. The impetus of his study is the political reform or *Reformasi*, as the term has been used in both neighbouring countries to describe undergoing political transformation to escape from authoritarian politics[168].

Here, cinema is framed by Irawanto as having progressive potential as it has been directly linked to politics. Cinema has the capacity to "broaden a horizon of possibilities through images and gestures by making visible and audible those who have been marginalized and discriminated within a plural society."[169] Therefore Irawanto's research is very much linked to the idea of the capacity of cinema to shed light on the invisible and has a strong affinity with the idea of publicness. However, he refuses to link this cinematic potential to the liberal concept of civil society as it has several severe biases, such as discounting religions and ethnic belongings, siding with the educated middle class, and overlooking the poor and lower class sometimes by deeming them illegals[170]. In his attempt to put cinema as having an emancipatory function to push democratic society, Irawanto provides narratives analysis of the

---

[167] *Ibid,* 4-11.

[168] *Ibid,* 2-3.

[169] *Ibid,* 26.

[170] *Ibid,* 32.

cinema and connects it to its contemporary situations. These close readings of the narrative are then combined with some socio-political situations that have been faced by the filmmakers, including some infrastructural conditions and changes in cinema culture in general[171].

Irawanto's work resonates a lot with my own project, as he also sees the media (in his case film) as entangled with politics, and deems the latter able to be the site in which resistance against domination could take place. Some important points that have affinity with my own research include his attempt to catalogue film festivals in Indonesia, and his mention of some cases of censorship and pressure on filmmakers to negotiate with a restrictive visual regime[172] being imposed by, mostly, conservative groups. This latter point is important in relation to my own study on publicness since it involves the exclusion and inclusion of topics to be foregrounded in Indonesia.

However, Irawanto's approach is centred on the potential of film narratives to distribute the sensible as the qualitative capacity of the cinema in providing avenues for transformation[173]. Irawanto emphasises close reading, contextualising the narrative and asserting the significance of these narratives in the socio-political arrangement. This approach can be understood in relation to the arguments for Indonesian cinema made by Said, albeit with a totally different approach. Rather than seeing Indonesian cinema as having an essential quality and linking it to the truest representation (the 'true face of Indonesia'), Irawanto sees films as having the

---

[171] *Ibid.*

[172] *Ibid,* 209-231.

[173] *Ibid,* 26.

possibility of channelling desires and their emancipatory possibilities[174]. This is a very important leap from signification based on representation, which includes naïve exclusions of some cinematic expressions, as Said did.

A smaller work from Irawanto on documentary[175] film happened to be a very useful reference for my thesis, as he takes note of his experience from being a jury member at FFD for a few years and beyond. This work gives an evaluation of the artistic values of documentary films screened at FFD over the years and then compare them with some newer works that circulated widely in Indonesia. This work is referred to often throughout the thesis as the starting point for dialogue on the development of documentary film culture in Indonesia.

Another article that I have to mention is written by Alexandra Corby, who observes activist film festivals in Indonesia and Malaysia[176]. She employs the term 'friction' from anthropologist Anna Tsing in looking at the festivals[177]. Corby emphasises on the festival as the site of friction to suggest the potential of film festivals as sites for political transformation. This work inspired me to explore more on Tsing's approach in looking at global connections for my case studies. Tsing's work is basically an ethnographic study of global connection that happens in unpredictable

---

[174] *Ibid,* 39.

[175] Budi Irawanto, "Beyond Big Dramatic Moments: Indonesian Documentary Films in 21st Century," in *Asian Documentary Today* (eds.) Jane HC Yu and Asian Network of Democracy (Busan: Busan International Film Festival, 2012).

[176] Alexandra Corby, "It's Not Just About Films: Activist Film Festivals in Post-New Order Indonesia," in *Activist Film Festivals: Towards A Political Subject* (ed.) Sonia Tascon and Tyson Wils (Bristol: Intellect, 2017).

[177] Corby, "It's Not Just About Films, 184.

and messy way. This friction is important for the production of culture, as Tsing states:

> Cultures are continually co-produced in the interaction I call 'friction': the awkward, unequal and unstable and creative qualities of interconnection across difference.[178]

Friction is very instructive for me to see how documentary film culture is being produced in Indonesia because it involves the local, national and global networks that works consecutively in unpredictable way.

Another work that is important for this research is Ekky Imanjaya's thesis at the University of East Anglia about classic Indonesian exploitation cinema[179]. This thesis examines the distribution of Indonesian classic films, mostly produced in 1975 to 1995, into the international market and their significance in questioning the official cultural history of Indonesian cinema. Here, Imanjaya follows the path of Heider in studying films, which are considered to be popular entertainment with low quality artistic values, to interrogate and challenge the politics of taste on cinema in Indonesia[180]. What is particularly interesting in Imanjaya's thesis is a thorough discussion about the domestic exhibition platform for the classic exploitation cinema, especially the open-air cinema or *layar tancap*. Sen mentions *layar tancap* in her book, but it is Imanjaya who discusses this platform in great detail to see the importance of *layar tancap* in the formation of taste during the New Order, where it became the site for the circulation of Indonesian classic cult film. Imanjaya defends

---

[178] Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2005), 4.

[179] Ekky Imanjaya, "The Cultural Traffic of Classic Indonesian Exploitation Cinema," (PhD Thesis, University of East Anglia, 2018).

[180] *Ibid*, 10.

the position of this platform and the culture born from it to argue on the rejection of dominant state-approved products by the audience, based on the more modest form of entertainment[181]. For Imanjaya, this *layar tancap* is the site for the formation of agency and at the same time became an arena to contest the legitimate culture imposed by the New Order.

Conclusion

My thesis is in dialogue with the works mentioned above. Jurriens' study on publicness is a very good starting point for me to see the way media operates in the new situation of the openness that happened in limited way in the early 1990s before it totally opened with *Reformasi* in 1998. The idea of the public sphere discussed by Habermas is very useful to analyse this space with regards to the organisation of my case studies. The organisations in the case studies are NGOs and media organisations and they operate according to the logic of actors in civil society – a space separate from the market, the state and the private realm of family life. From this starting point, the research examines the way these organisations undertake their ventures in making things happen around documentary film, and also the way some others implement strategies that problematize the separation of markets from the civil society. The analysis of NGOs' place in civil society as discussed by Aspinall is also instructive in giving a framework for further examination of the institutional formats in the case studies of this thesis to examine the link between NGOs, film communities and the concept of civil society in the public sphere.

---

[181] *Ibid,* 80.

Reformasi has also opened a 'space' as an arena for the filmmakers, producers, festival programmers and film activists in general (or the cultural producers in Paramaditha's term) to work. This is a stark contrast with the situation under the New Order, where the state's control was pervasive in various aspects of filmmaking, from production to exhibition and beyond. The remnants of the authoritarian regime have been an issue, where the state and other conservative elements in the society – including the censorship bureau established in the New Order era – are still working to control that 'space' showing the conflicting values where the thinking of the authoritarian regime is still an issue. Paramaditha's work on the new generation of filmmakers that she calls 'wild children' is very useful in giving a framework for actors that are working in the post-authoritarian space. The label 'activists' attributed to them is justifiable especially because their activities contribute to the formation of this open space for film practices to take place. This is very instructive in seeing activism as having multiple meanings and various articulations.

The thesis is also in dialogue with Imanjaya's argument about the exhibition practice of *layar tancap*, as it discusses a similar practice that comes from a totally different direction. The lack of exhibition infrastructure for documentary film has made *layar tancap* an alternative screening practice for one of my case studies. In this practice, particular attention to the screening site and mode of engagement are observed to open a possibility for the formation of 'public feeling' where the members of the audience connect with the narrative that is also influenced by the material conditions of the screening in an emotional fashion.

Chapter 3

Approach and Methodology

This chapter discusses the approach and methodology I used in conducting my research. My project does not solely focus on the narrative aspects of film, instead it follows the ideas of "new film history", an approach that looks at the complex relationships between films and the social context within which they are produced. This new history approach is different than "old film history" in that the latter mostly focused on the history of film as an art form, or film as reflection or mirror of society. In contrast, my approach views film's aesthetics and style as being entangled with the economic, industrial and technological factors that have created them[1]. Here, new film history focuses on

> Greater attention to the cultural dynamics of film production and an awareness of the extent to which the style and content of films are determined by the context of production.[2]

Following that strand of thought, this research is not a study of the history of film from the aesthetics, nor does it explore documentary as a particular genre within the realm of film taxonomy. Rather than examining documentary films through textual interpretation alone, this project considers documentary as a mode of filmmaking or, as suggested by Paul Arthur, a "mode of production, network of funding, filming,

---

[1] James Chapman, Mark Glancy and Sue Harper, "Introduction" in Chapman, Glancy and Harper (eds). *The New Film History: Sources, Methods and Approaches.* (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2007), 5-6.

[2] Chapman, Glancy and Harper, "Introduction", 6.

postproduction, and exhibition tendencies common to work normally indexed as 'documentary'"[3].

Studying documentary as an institution is in line with recent developments in this area of research, as noted by De Michiel and Zimmerman, who describe the shift in theory and practice from text-centred towards seeing documentary film as

> "a nexus of technology, form, histories, community, politics, convening, collaborations, mobilities, movements and strategies"[4].

The purpose of documentary film study has moved from attempting to interpret texts to build a list of the most important documentaries in a national context (as a study of national cinema[5]) to examination of the circular relationships between film, aesthetics and people that "open up discourses and spaces for action"[6].

Although my research investigates "civic engagement" and publicness, my intention is not to assess the effectiveness of documentary film as a one-way communication coming from documentary filmmakers and nongovernmental activists designed to instigate political change. Instead, this thesis looks at the interconnectedness between participatory media and politics, bringing together the realm of aesthetics and the circumstantial network behind a film's development and

---

[3] Paul Arthur, "Extreme Makeover: The Changing Face of Documentary" in *Cineaste*, 30, no. 3, (2005): 20.

[4] Helen De Michiel and Patricia R. Zimmermann, "Documentary as Open Space," *Documentary Film Book* (ed.) Brian Winston (London: BFI, 2013), 355.

[5] See Salim Said, *Shadow*.

[6] De Michiel and Zimmermann, "Documentary as Open Space", 356.

distribution to examine "the political fields constituted by images, the practices of circulation that propel them, and the platforms on which they are made manifest"[7].

This approach is informed by studies that have been developed by anthropologists who work on media, because they found media, as described by Ginsburg, et.al, as

> …a rich site for research on cultural practices and circulation that took seriously the multiple levels of identification— regional, national, and transnational— within which societies and cultures produce subjects.[8]

Here, media is considered to have the capacity to put identity and an individual's mode of self-identification into question as their circumstances might be changed, expanded, shrunk or transformed, through media. Understanding of society and culture is formed not only from whatever is available in the immediate vicinity, but also from considering layers of identification that interact within particular individuals as well as collective experiences. In other words, media roles are seen as ubiquitous in identity formation.

The approach used by Ginsburg et.al. goes beyond the production studio, to follow media contents and how they circulate within a particular environment. This enables the researcher to approach the media consumers and producers as "imbricated in discursive universes, political situations, economic circumstances, national settings, historical moments, and transnational flows" and other contexts[9].

---

[7] Meg McLagan and Yates McKee, "Introduction" in *Sensible Politics: The Visual Culture of Nongovernmental Activism* (ed.) Meg McLagan and Yates McKee (New York: Zone Books, 2012), 9.

[8] Faye D. Ginsburg, Lila Abu-Lughod, and Brian Larkin, "Introduction", in *Media World: Anthropology in New Terrain*. Faye D. Ginsburg, Lila Abu-Lughod, and Brian Larkin (eds.). (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2002), 5.

[9] Ginsburg et. al., ibid. 2.

This approach challenges the stability of "texts" or content in the media and places them as part of social practices, both for the producers and the consumers. Texts or media content in this approach do not stand on their own to produce meanings irrespective of the consumers' or audiences' social and political positions. Rather, they are always connected to the people that produce and consume them and the circumstances in which those production or consumption processes take place. To sum up, in this approach, researchers look at the media in this way:

> Through grounded analyses of the practices, cultural worlds, and even fantasies of social actors as they interact with media in a variety of social spaces, we have begun to unbundle assumptions regarding the political economy and social relations shaping media production, circulation, and reception, and the impacts of media technologies themselves[10].

An example of this approach is Barry Dornfeld's study on multi-sited ethnography, where he examines the production of a documentary for American public broadcasting that goes beyond the studio[11]. Dornfeld takes inspiration from what he considers as a shortcoming in conventional media studies, namely the separation of the three 'branches' in the study of media, which are: production theory, 'text' or interpretation theory and reception theory. His ambition is to go beyond these confines to integrate production, interpretation and reception in researching the media. In the production side, for example, Dornfeld placed the production team in the 'social organisation' of television production rather than seeing documentary production as merely the result of the individual authorship of an artist.[12] He examines documentary creative decisions as part of collegial decision-making

---

[10] Ginsburg et. al. 6

[11] Barry Dornfeld, "Putting American Public Television Documentary in Its Places" in Ginsburg, et.al (eds.) *Media World*, 247-263.

[12] Dornfeld, "Putting", 252.

processes and negotiations in an institutional settings rather than as determined by an artist's effort to realize their vision. In this view, content and its institutional support are linked. This linking also goes to the reception side, where Dornfeld considers the audience as part of social organisation in the production mechanism. The audience is a topic that is heavily debated among the creative team, which in turn influences their artistic decisions in documentary production. In other words, the concept of audience has been considered throughout the production and this has in turn influenced the content of the documentary.

Dornfeld also reminds his reader that this situation happens in a bigger setting especially as the broadcaster must face challenges from the broadcast industry to think in the logic of the free market, regardless of their mission to educate the public and to provide educational values in their programming. In Dornfeld's words:

> In the end, tensions get played out, more or less successfully, between the "magic" of documentary realism and the edification of expository explanation, between the programs as engaging televisual experience and the programs as scholarly knowledge, both tendencies mediated by the producers' practical logic and the aesthetic ideologies of program production[13].

Dornfeld's case has shown the aesthetic outcome of media as a constant struggle that happens on the institutional level of production as well as in the bigger context of the media and its surroundings. This approach is useful for my research as I see a film's aesthetic should not be seen as separated from its institutional arrangements. The aesthetics and its institutional arrangements are always be seen as linked.

In line with this approach is Janet Harbord's book on film culture[14]. Harbord explains cinema and modernism through examination of films' aesthetics and the

---

[13] Dornfeld, "Putting", 257.

[14] Janet Harbord, *Film Cultures* (London: Sage, 2002).

institutions they come from, noting that aesthetics are connected to the socio-historical configuration in which they arise. Previous approaches in film studies have put more focus on the film's apparatuses, the psychoanalysis of subjectivity and the semiotic approach[15]. In contrast, when thinking about the formation of the political, Harbord emphasizes the inextricable connection between film aesthetics and production and circulation. She gives more attention to the formation of the aesthetics and the institutional arrangement in which films are circulated, rather than contrasting the audience as cinematic subjects on one side and as actual film viewers on the other.

Part of what constitutes any film culture is the spectators and their psychological and emotional responses to films. Judith Mayne discusses the relationship between spectators and film, proposing that the interconnection of these is based on binary poles of filmic evaluation, meaning the spectators are either 'critical' or 'complacent' to the dominant tenets in a society[16]. Harbord in her examination of film culture rejects this binary of filmic evaluation to open up the possibility of film viewing as less hierarchical. In investigating the 'critical' and 'complacent' evaluation of films, Harbord incorporates the network and infrastructure through which films are circulated when examining films' aesthetics. The viewers' responses and film aesthetics are not seen as separated from the social, political and economic institutions that make the production and circulation possible in the first place[17].

---

[15] Harbord, *Film Cultures,* 12.

[16] Judith Mayne, *Cinema and Spectatorship* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 3-4.

[17] See Harbord, *Film Cultures*, 2-3.

With this in mind, my study of documentary film culture involves observing films' narratives and their institutional aspects, particularly through some documentary film organisations, and paying attention to the interplay between these to generate further discussion on publicness and dialogue about the public in Indonesia. Harbord does not mention documentary film specifically in her study nor point to a particular rubric or genre as being pertinent to the effort to understand continuity and change. However, for some other scholars, documentary film has occupied a special territory for explaining the socio-historical world in a modern context. Based on the assumption that it is faithful to the 'reality' it represents, documentary film is taken as a credible model for making sense of the modern social and political world. Bill Nichols in his book *Introduction to Documentary* has concluded the general acceptance of the place of documentary film where:

> …documentary images generally capture people and events that belong to the world we share rather than present characters and actions invented to tell a story that refers back to our world obliquely or allegorically. One important way in which they do so is by respecting known facts and providing verifiable evidence.[18]

This idea of documentary as an index to reality has given it a heightened status among other genres of film, especially in providing the "social imaginary" asserted by Jonathan Kahana[19], where documentary can be a "common understanding that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy"[20].

The perception of documentary as a modern tool for obtaining truth has played an important role in determining its social and political position. Documentary is

---

[18] Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press), 7-8.

[19] Jonathan Kahana, *Intelligence Work: The Politics of American Documentary* (Columbia University Press, 2008), 2.

[20] *Ibid*, 2.

considered to generate 'publicness' and the sense of the socio-political as opposed to fiction film, which is understood as mostly targeting people as individuals to elicit psychological responses from its viewers. The main reason for that is the difference in the way these two genres address their viewers. Fiction and documentary films have a different tradition of storytelling with different styles of address, provoking different sorts of responses from audience members[21]. Looking at this relational aspect of the medium and its viewers, Michael Chanan asserts the difference in how fiction and documentary film function:

> Fiction movies, inheriting the narrative paradigms of nineteenth-century novel and drama, bourgeois forms modified by cinema's populist vocation, appeal directly to the spectator's emotional and sentimental life, their private subjectivity – even when dealing with public, historical or political subjects. Documentary, on the other hand, speaks to the viewer as citizen, as a member of social collective, putative participant in the public sphere.[22]

Chanan goes further to explore the documentary narrative's capacity to make the viewer engage with certain issues foregrounded by the film beyond the screening to connect with the 'real world' it represents. He looks at the way documentary narratives contribute to the formation of a public sphere by instigating discussion about the *doxa* (the unspoken issues in the social world), which leads to the viewer's engagement with the issue. Chanan describes this as a criterion in defining the relation of documentary and public sphere[23]. To have a critical function in contributing to the formation of a public sphere, documentary must not conform to the dominant tenets of society[24].

---

[21] Michael Chanan, *The Politics of Documentary* (London: BFI, 2007), 16.

[22] *Ibid*, 16.

[23] *Ibid,* 27-8.

[24] *Ibid.*

However, this approach in looking at documentary film narratives has been challenged especially by spectator studies, which holds that film watching does not necessarily elicit a certain type of response. The documentary verisimilitude and the audience's perception of it are important, but not necessarily stable – documentaries do not always elicit 'sober' responses from viewers' that improve their critical judgment on the social and political world. This type of response is one among many responses possible in evaluating documentaries. In Harbord's words:

> Filmic representation is precisely re-presentation, a fabrication, a replaying of stories, images and conventions; it is the replay of a language rather than a replay of the 'real'. Subsequently, our engagement with this language, our interpellation by it, is never assured, but open to replay, performing differently, potentially rupturing the spaces of normative identification as much as shoring them up.[25]

Therefore, my approach treats documentary film as part of the institutions that make and distribute it, because it does not necessarily cause the audience to critically evaluate social and political life at the point of viewing, but it can open up possibilities that make different types of engagement possible. Documentary film might also enable different types of response, including emotional responses, which also shape perception and subjectivity in defined social contexts[26]. What is important about these responses is that they are located within certain institutional practices rather than merely at the level of narrative or documentary address.

In other words, the public address of documentary works in conjunction with its institutional formats, rather than being the only way the films create publicness or influence the public sphere. To put this into current study of documentary film, it is

---

[25] Janet Harbord, *Film Cultures*, 128.

[26] Belinda Smaill, *Documentary: Politics, Emotions, Culture* (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2010), 4.

important to consider recent changes in the socio-political institutions that have meant that documentary film making is now "structurally presumed to have different forms of life, to exist in different modalities, extended across multiple platforms and networks"[27].

This situation has caused documentary filmmakers, especially those who work outside studios or the broadcasting system, to consider their environment, including mechanisms for funding and circulation, as inherently part of their filmmaking venture. As a result, they are "encouraged to think of themselves as entrepreneurs whose film practice is essentially a small business"[28]. Meg McLagan talks about how these changes in the environment have made her reconfigure her filmmaking practices and how, as these changes have become more prevalent, they have even begun to influence aesthetics[29]. This approach is not necessarily adopted by all documentary filmmakers, but it is a neat demonstration of how the socio-political and economic institutions of documentary are becoming part of the observation of films themselves, and hence why the approach I use in this thesis is justified.

The research

To study documentary film culture "as a practice embedded in spatial and psychological contexts of social hierarchy and distinction[30]", I selected three

[27] Meg McLagan, "Imagining impact: Documentary film and the production of political effect" in *Sensible Politics: The Visual Culture of Nongovernment Activism* (ed.) Meg McLagan and Yates McKee (New York: Zone Book, 2012), 306.

[28] *Ibid*, 314.

[29] *Ibid*, 313-5.

[30] Harbord, *Film Cultures*, 2.

documentary film organisations in Indonesia: Indonesian Documentary Film Centre (In-Docs), Festival Film Dokumenter Yogyakarta (FFD) and Watchdoc Documentary Maker (Watchdoc). I selected these organisations primarily based on the consideration that they have been working directly as the institutions in which documentary films are produced and circulated, and have been operating for a comparatively long period of time. Considering the lack of infrastructure and government support for documentary film in Indonesia, the fact that these organisations can sustain their operation reflects how they have managed to generate practices that affect the culture in which they grow. The way these organisations sustain themselves serves as the entry point for looking at documentary films as part of media consumption, and therefore the relevance of these organisations within the public culture in general.

These organisations are selected because they of their wide-ranging activities in documentary film. They have been working in production, distribution, and exhibition of documentary film in Indonesia, providing training and workshops for documentary filmmakers to nurture talent, and then providing platforms for those talents to screen their films. They have also initiated and been involved intensively in film festivals, and other exhibition platforms, which is an important part of the development of film culture to examine not only the formation of documentary aesthetics in the society but also how those aesthetics are related to the institutions that produce them.

Moreover, these organisations have also worked extensively with other institutions that are not directly related to documentary film to make their activities happen. This provides dynamics and tensions between the need to open up spaces for documentary film and the wider significance of those particular media formats in

the society at large. Those institutions include foreign embassies and cultural centres in Indonesia, transnational NGOs and international philanthropy organisations, domestic and local NGOs, labour unions, schools, student associations, and more. The collaborations are examined to give insights into the way documentary film culture has been developing within the constraints and possibilities of these non-state and non-commercial sectors.

This research is, however, a study of organisations. Therefore, I draw on organisation studies to help me to understand the place of these three organisations in the making of the contemporary documentary film culture in Indonesia. However, study of organisations has a tendency to place the organisation as a final object unrelated to its surroundings. To examine the organisations without losing the ethnographic elements of those organisation – meaning their relationships to to their surrounding world – I use the 'organisation as process' approach[31]. This approach tries to overcome the limits of theory in analysing organisations by "interpreting organisation as the process of connecting heterogeneous elements"[32]. Rather than seeing organisations as structure, leadership, or decision making process, this approach sees organisations as connected to their history.

This approach starts with seeing the world as 'tangled' – a word that being used extensively in Hernes' book because:

> It conveys an imagery illustrative of how processes may be both distinguishable and indistinguishable, how they relate more in some ways and less in others. It is also descriptive of how a shape is temporarily formed while at the same time it is

[31] Tor Hernes and Elke Weik, "Organisation as process: Drawing a line between endogenous and exogenous views," *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 23 (2007), 251-264. See also Tor Hernes, *Understanding Organisation as Process: Theory for A Tangled World*. (London and New York: Routledge, 2008).

[32] Hernes and Weik, "Organisation", 258.

> unformed, because a tangled mass may continuously be on the move to becoming something else.[33]

This quote emphasises the difficulty in analysing organisations and their elements as "fixed entities"[34] because they can be deemed as having one meaning but this can change on other occasions. The entanglement of the organisations and their surroundings has created difficulties in understanding them as isolated entities. Therefore, rather than seeing organisations as something fixed or final, Hernes suggests that organisations should be understood within the range of possibility of what they might become. Organisations should be seen as "under continuous modification and reproduction" rather than having fixed qualities or falling under neat classifications.[35] In other words, these organisations should always be seen as in the process of becoming.[36]

This process theory is rather different from the 'traditional approach', which mainly classifies organisations based on decisions, actors or the documents they produce. In the alternative view, the organisations are their histories[37], which makes it difficult to separate the organisation from others around them and from other socio-cultural institutions. In Hernes' words, an organisation is "a unique product of circumstances and a unique producer of circumstances in turn".[38] Since the organisations are in the process of becoming, and they contribute to the production

---

[33] Tor Hernes, *Understanding Organisation*, xv.

[34] *Ibid*, xv.

[35] *Ibid,* xv.

[36] *Ibid*, xviii.

[37] *Ibid*, xvi

[38] *Ibid.*

of documentary film culture, my thesis will see this film culture as part of this process, rather than as something finished.

This approach has informed the way I gathered data from these three organisations, mainly as getting a sense of how they have become what they are over time. I gathered data by looking into their past as well as observing them in their day-to-day activities[39], rather than exclusively looking at them from documents or archive holdings. Seeing this organisation as process has also benefitted me in doing my research especially for observing the attitudes of and decisions made by my informants as part of problem solving within the organisations, but at the same time putting them into the bigger context of the organisation's history. These organisations' objectives, struggles and internal mechanisms have provided intermediary explanations about decisions made (or never made) by the key informants in my research as these people operate within the limitations of and support from the organisation they work for.

Methodology

This research needed to be multi-disciplinary, as it looks into culture, which according to academic and literary critic Raymond Williams, is one of the most complicated words in the English language[40]. Harbord in her book about film cultures does not specify what she means by the term. She uses film cultures as an

[39] Ann Langley and Haridimos Tsoukas, "Introducing "Perspectives on Process Organization Studies" in *Process, Sensemaking and Organizing* (eds.) Tor Hernes and Sally Maitlis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 11.

[40] Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society.* (London: Fontana Press, 1983), 87.

independent phrase related to the formation of tastes and the circumstances in which they were formed, because this process does not happen separately from the environment, and instead it is determined by it. Therefore, this study is about film culture as a signifying system and as a material product at the same time[41].

The methodology I employ in this research had to be supple enough to oscillate between studying culture in both these ways. It had to be able to switch between cultural studies methods, such as interpretation of narrative, and investigating materials gathered from social sciences methods, such as interviews and publications. Raymond Williams finds there is not a clear separation between these two camps and he finds that they are more related rather than contrasted[42].

The approach that I employ should be able to examine film narratives in two different ways; as symbolic systems and as a set of practices of the organisations I studied. These practices are the result of actions taken by the organisations and are embedded in spatio-temporal contexts, grounded in the production and circulatory aspects of films. Here, film is seen as part of "social practice" where:

> …the understanding of its production and consumption, its pleasures and its meanings, is enclosed within the study of the workings of culture itself.[43]

My project also gathered data through social science methods such as observation, interviews, and publications. Together, the activities of the organisations and the people involved in my research produce a kind of 'narrative', which is interpreted in conjunction with the production and reception of the documentaries.

---

[41] *Ibid*, 91.

[42] *Ibid*.

[43] Graeme Turner, *Film as Social Practice*, 4th Edition, (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 2.

The method described above is basically derived and adapted from Halberstam's notion of 'queer methodology' [44], which is a way to study cultures that have been suppressed, in which public expressions have become problematic given the existing social and political circumstances. Halberstam emphasizes the flexibility of the method in oscillating between texts and social practices, between the private and its public expression, allowing the method to unearth things that would be excluded in the rigid disciplinary approaches of cultural studies and social sciences. In Halberstam's words:

> A queer methodology, in a way, is a scavenger methodology that uses different methods to collect and produce information on subjects who have been deliberately or accidentally excluded from traditional studies of human behaviour. The queer methodology attempts to combine methods that are often cast as being at odds with each other, and it refuses the academic compulsion toward disciplinary coherence.[45]

Publicness and dialogue about the public in general come into being in relation to discourse and its circulation, and this circulation is limited both in time and space. In a geographical sense, the space of circulation can transcend its physical limitations using current media technology[46], as will be shown in this project, but time is still a limiting factor in the ability of an address to become public, as argued by Warner:

> It is not texts themselves that create publics, but the concatenation of texts through time. Only when a previously existing discourse can be supposed, and a responding discourse be postulated, can a text address a public.[47]

---

[44] Jack Halberstam, *Female Masculinity*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998), 10.

[45] Halberstam, *Female Masculinity*, 13.

[46] See for example Chris Berry, Soyoung Kim and Lynn Spigel (ed.), *Electronic Elsewhere*.

[47] Michael Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics," *Public Culture*, 4, no. 1, (2002): 48.

I found Halberstam's method very instructive for a number of reasons. Besides enabling me to be flexible in my approach between cultural studies and social sciences, I found this method also useful for me to work on a culture that has been repressed or hidden beneath the surface. Halberstam's method is used to examine individual subjectivity, but it is useful also to place this subjectivity in a socio-political framework rather than a psychological or medical one. This is in line with Ann Cvetkovich's method of researching "public feelings" where she writes about underrepresented culture in the media from music festivals and exhibitions[48]. For Cvetkovich, those events enact utopian possibilities based on rational as well as emotional subjectivities that have their place within the socio-political configuration, in the public sphere[49]. This 'scavenging' method is similar to my observation of screening events and film festival and has helped me to select and interpret data from my observations that would best illustrate the recent development of documentary film culture in post-1998 Indonesia.

I have supplemented this scavenging method with another approach borrowed from De Valck's study of film festivals[50], seeing as one of my case studies was a film festival. The data I gathered from the film festival in my case study was a combination of historical documents and secondary literature as well as contemporary material, including interviews and observation. The contemporary material was gathered from participating in the film festival (and associated public screenings), interviewing others, and media analysis. Information for the film festival histories has been

---

[48] Ann Cvetkovich, "Public feeling," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 106. No.3 (2007): 466-467.

[49] *Ibid*.

[50] Marijke De Valck, *Film Festivals: From European Geopolitics to Global Cinephilia* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007), 22.

gathered from festival publications (print and online), festival catalogues, archives and secondary sources, including social media feeds. Festival reports available from newspapers, television shows, radio programmes, websites, YouTube channels, and others, are included in my research.

Data gathering: Interviews and observation

One of the main methods for gathering data in this project was interviews. These were especially for situations in which people's behaviour could not be directly observed. There are three main types of interviews in social science: highly structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and unstructured or informal interviews[51]. The highly structured interview is usually done in a rigid fashion, where the wording and set of questions have been predetermined. This type of interview is usually considered to be an oral form of a written survey, and it was not suitable for my project as it was not flexible enough to capture the dynamics that happen in the conversation. In an unstructured or informal interview, the wording and set of questions are not predetermined. This type of interview is done in a more conversational fashion. Often, this kind of interview is used when the researcher does not know enough about the phenomenon of his or her research subject to ask relevant questions. In this case, the goal of the interview is to learn about the research object and formulate the questions for later interviews[52].

---

[51] Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 2009), 89.

[52] *Ibid.*

The third type is the semi-structured interview. This type of interview includes a mix of predetermined and spontaneous questions and all of them are used flexibly. The largest part of the interview is guided by a list of questions and issues to be explored, where the respondents are required to provide specific data[53]. Another part is a more spontaneous follow up to the answers provided by the interviewees. In this project, I used the semi-structured interview as I needed my respondents to answer specific questions about their activities in documentary film production and circulation in relation to their organisation and beyond. However, I also needed the respondents to be able to explore some particular ideas and events related to their answers, so a degree of flexibility was necessary in the interviewing process.

The questions were divided into two main categories. The first one covered the respondents' activities related to the production and circulation of documentary film. In this category, the questions were designed to gather and confirm or reconfirm data about the activities of the organisations under observation. The idea was to recheck the facts and reconfirm data that had been acquired prior to the interviews, or to gain deeper insights into the situation behind some facts. The preliminary data was collected from the organisations' project documents and publications as well as media coverage and social media feeds.

The second category of questions covered the socio-political world surrounding the organisations' activities. Questions in this category were meant to gather data not covered by the first category, where the respondents were expected to provide information about the reasoning involved in the organisations' activities. This

[53] *Ibid*.

category provided insights into the thinking process behind certain activities, including the respondents' intentions, objectives, obstacles they faced and strategies and tactics they came up with to overcome such hindrances.

Another data gathering method that I employed in this project was to observe and take notes during the production and circulation of documentary films, as well as during other activities related to making documentary film public. To put the spotlight on 'publicness', I prioritised observing the circulation processes, especially exhibition, where documentary films meet their viewers. As well as obtaining data from publications and social media posts made by the organisations that were holding screenings, I also sat among the audience members during the screenings. In particular, I noted the setting of the screening, since a few of were done in open-air settings or other non-theatrical screening venues. Besides the physical environment and geographical locations, I also made note of the screening equipment used, the type of people who attend the screening, how the audience responded during the screening, and the post-screening discussion.

Film screenings are events that often last only for a couple of hours, it was important that the note taking processes were swift and prompt. As well as making notes in a notebook describing what took place at the screening, I also took pictures of the event using my cellular phone. I used a phone rather than a camera because I did not really need good quality photos and the phone is less intrusive than a camera. These mechanisms did not cover the event in an entirely comprehensive or encyclopaedic way, but they helped me to sort out information according to my needs more efficiently.

I also gathered data from photos, newsletters and other publication materials, documents, legal papers, festival catalogues, DVDs and any other materials produced by the organisations I was studying. Besides these secondary materials, I made observations while visiting the offices of the organisations. I also collected data from the social media streams (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube) of these organisations and those of some of the key people within the organisations. These social media channels were all public. I used this data as a complement to my main method of collecting data from observation and interview.

To collect data from In-Docs, I stayed in their office to see how they operate as an organisation. I observed their operations in December 2016, when they were preparing a regional meeting for documentary film organisations in Southeast Asia. At In-Docs' request, I was also involved in the Southeast Asian regional meeting as a moderator, helping to maintain the flow of the discussion and actively participating in the networking event. I took notes after the event.

This event then continued with an 'impact workshop' for Southeast Asian documentary filmmakers organised by In-Docs, with mentor Beadie Finzie from London-based organisation Britdoc (now called Doc Society). I attended the workshop as an observer, taking notes during the workshop and watching teams of filmmakers present their projects before receiving coaching to prepare them for a bigger event called Goodpitch^2 (Goodpitch Squared) that was to be conducted a year later. Another event that I attended at In-Docs was Screendoc Expanded, a mini documentary film festival conducted at the Dutch cultural centre in Jakarta, Erasmus Huis. The mini festival ran for five days, 1-4 December 2016.

As for Festival Film Dokumenter (FFD) Yogyakarta, I was invited to be a jury member and a speaker in the festival in 2016. The festival was conducted 7-12 December 2016 in Yogyakarta, 450 kilometres from the capital city, Jakarta. Besides watching films, I was also involved in a post-screening talk about sensory ethnography[54]. The film that was screened before the talk was Danusiri's *On Broadway*, which was produced as part of his involvement in the Sensory Ethnography Lab led by filmmaker Julien Castaing-Taylor. During this talk, I observed the discussion and took notes on the questions from the audience.

Another event I attended during the FFD festival was the masterclass programme for documentary film makers. The mentors for this masterclass were international producers and filmmakers: Ranjan Palit from India, John Appel from the Netherlands and Malinda Wink from Australia[55]. This fringe section was conducted in Rumah Tembi, the resort for the festival's international guests located on the outskirts of Yogyakarta.

To observe Watchdoc, I made a few visits to their office in Bekasi, a satellite city of Jakarta. I observed an informal gathering of students who did their internships at Watchdoc and produced a documentary. The informal gathering was part of the editorial process in making the documentary. During this visit I also observed a Skype interview that Watchdoc conducted with a candidate who had applied for a position as a video journalist at Watchdoc. This observation was important for me to see the daily operation of the organisation.

---

[54] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2016* (Programme Catalogue 2016) (Yogyakarta: FFD, 2016), 93 (my translation).

[55] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2016*, 95.

Another Watchdoc event I attended was the screening of *Jakarta Unfair* on 26 November 2016. The screening was conducted in Kampung Akuarium, North Jakarta, one of the slum areas affected by the eviction policy, in an open-air setting. I attended this screening to observe and take note of one of Watchdoc's open-air screening activities, as they have done many open-air screenings to find an alternative way of distributing their documentaries. This activity was also important examining the reception of documentary narrative in a particular screening environment. I observed the surroundings and the material conditions of the screening, as well as the audience response, to see how these are correlated.

Self-reflexivity

Besides the methodology and data gathering mentioned above, my position as the researcher in this project is important to disclose, as research does not happen in a vacuum and always involves social, and arguably political, relations. As a film critic who has been active in writing about Indonesian film, I have an interest in the development of Indonesian film culture. My position is not that of "a detached scientist" who did the research without trying to represent film culture according to my values and interests[56]. As someone who has been involved in film culture in Indonesia for more than a decade, I am interested in supporting the development of

[56] This position is taken by Hortense Powdermaker who did anthropological research on Hollywood in the 1950s, in which she posits herself as a disinterested scientist with regard to making her career in the film industry, a rarity in Hollywood. She argues that this position has enabled her to be seen as an unthreatening subject throughout her entire research. See Hortense Powdermaker, *Hollywood The Dream Factory: An Anthropologist Looks at the Movie-Makers*. (Mansfield, Connecticut: Martino Publishing, 2013), 3-5.

Indonesian cinema, helping in what has been described by another researcher, Intan Paramaditha, as its "move from experimentation to institutionalisation"[57].

I am cognizant of my position as a film critic not only in this particular research but in the process of institutionalisation of the new generation film community as mentioned by Paramaditha above; this personal position might influence the outcome of my study[58]. As a critic, I have been taking part in the film culture with my writings, public talks and being a jury in festivals and competitions, and the participants in my study are not only aware of this position, but they have also been enhancing my 'career' as a critic by giving me chances to be a jury member in their festival or to be involved in their organisation. It is important to note that activities within the film culture in Indonesia have been imbued with idea of "cultural activism" to open up space after the 1998 political reform, rather than the ideas associated with a developed film industry with its established institutions. The organisations I studied also belong to the non-profit sector and are run on a non-commercial basis, if not totally run as community-run organisations. The sense of community is prevalent among the people in film culture in Indonesia, because the commercial culture has not been developed, especially among festival organisers and documentary film organisations. As a critic, I am often considered as part of this big community, giving my own contribution to the undeveloped openness in which filmmaking and film culture in general manage to thrive after being hampered by the dictatorial regime of the New Order. Filmmakers consider critics to be their 'sparring partners' in the

[57] Intan Paramaditha, "Film Studies in Indonesia: An Experimentation of a Generation" in *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 173, no. 2/3 (2017): 372-3.

[58] Diana Watt, "On Becoming a Qualitative Researcher: The Value of Self-Reflexivity" in The Qualitative Report, 12, no.1 (2007): 88.

development of their aesthetics and film making practices in general[59]. This context is important for my position as a film critic at large in the context of film culture in Indonesia, especially as I have always been seen and see myself as partner of filmmaking, film community activists, and festival organisers, rather than as someone who merely judges their aesthetics practices, and this has somehow set the tone for the interaction with the participants in my research as they have been involved in film culture in general. The understanding of roles in the film culture was expressed in the willingness of the participants to be involved in my project as more than merely informants, but instead with expectations of the research to be part of the 'evaluation' of their position in documentary film culture and contribute to understanding of their activities[60].

Interpersonal power dynamics between myself as a researcher and the participants remain an issue that might appear in observations and interviews that require face-to-face encounters. The general rule of thumb in the interview situation is that the interviewer is perceived to have greater power in an interview regardless of their attempt to play down this hierarchical condition[61]. However the condition is much more dynamic than that, as in reality the interviewer cannot really be in control of the entire process of interview as she/he depends on the interviewee to get the project done. The interviewer might be able to influence and control the interview

---

[59] Eric Sasono, "Percakapan Joko Anwar, Edwin dan Eric Sasono, Bagian VII: Kritik Film di Indonesia Bukan Cuma Jelek, Tapi Parah" (Joko Anwar, Edwin and Eric Sasono: A Conversation – Part VI: Film Criticism in Indonesia is not only bad, it is awful), in *ericsasono.com*, 20 October, 2010, available online: https://ericsasono.com/2010/10/20/percakapan-joko-anwar-edwin-dan-eric-sasono-bagian-viii-kritik-film-di-indonesia-bukan-cuma-jelek-tapi-parah/, accessed 18 March 2019.

[60] Nobertus Nuranto. *Interview*.

[61] Frederic Anyan, "The Influence of Power Shifts in Data Collection and Analysis Stages: A Focus on Qualitative Research Interview" (2013): 3.

situation, but the interviewees have the power to discontinue the interview altogether, and to decide what to say in the interview and how they say it[62]. The sense of dependency on the interviewees makes the interviewer work out a power balance between them, and indeed this was pre-occupying me before and during the interviews. For me, the process of the interview was akin to an expansion of the 'sparring partner' metaphor as both parties are trying to produce something beneficial for all.

In my case as a film critic, this power dynamic is much stronger, as I have been perceived as to be more knowledgeable about films compared to other interviewers (say a journalist). One of my interviewees, FFD programmer Alia Damaihati prior to the interview mentioned that she was feeling afraid of making mistakes, especially in referring to particular titles or films or even programming at large, during the interview[63]. I countered this by saying to her that the interview is a process in producing knowledge together done by the interviewer and the interviewee and no such things as mistakes exist, especially because she exclusively possesses the knowledge and experiences related to programming at the FFD, and those are the key for the knowledge production process to happen. This has given her assurance about the interviewing process, and it went very well with her expressing some of her concerns and robust opinions about the Indonesian documentary film culture in general.

My position as a critic has granted me access to the organisations I studied long before I started this project, and they have invited me to be more involved in their

[62] Ibid. 4.

[63] Alia Damaihati. *Interview*.

activities. In Festival Film Dokumenter Yogyakarta (FFD), I served three times as a jury member in the main competition section (feature-length documentary) during the period 2009-2011[64]. It is important to note that I have never received any direct financial benefit from my role as a jury member for FFD, apart from travel expenses and basic accommodation. They do not pay participants and the premise of involvement has always been a voluntary contribution as part of the effort to develop film culture in the country.

My involvement has been greater with In-Docs[65]. I joined the organisation in 2008 as secretary for its executive board. In this position, I am not involved in the daily operation of the organisation, but only distanced supervision of its programmes. This has granted me access to In-Docs' documents and the chance to observe them conducting meetings when I was there during my research. My involvement in In-Docs has also always been without any financial benefit, and I was asked to join this non-profit organisation to contribute to the attempt to raise the status of documentary film in Indonesian society.

All research has been conducted with full permission from those involved in an accordance with university ethics requirements.

---

[64] For example, see "Festival Film Dokumenter akan Digelar di TBY" (Documentary Film Festival will be held at TBY), *Tribun Jogja*, 22 November 2012, accessed 14 August 2017, http://jogja.tribunnews.com/2012/11/22/festival-film-dokumenter-akan-digelar-di-tby, accessed on 4 January 2016. (My translation).

[65] "In-Docs," In-Docs, accessed 13 December 2018, http://www.in.in-docs.org/#!about-us/h70gg

Chapter 4

Indonesian Documentary Film Centre (In-Docs): Asserting the Importance of Documentary Film in Indonesia

This chapter examines the formative years of the documentary film culture that has thrived since the 1998 political change or *Reformasi* and its relation to publicness and debate about the public through observation of Indonesian Documentary Film Centre or In-Docs. In-Docs is established in 2002 in Jakarta and it continues to be in operation now. The history of In-Docs cannot be separated from Jakarta International Film Festival or JIFFest, another initiative from its parent organisation, The Indonesian Independent Film Foundation or YMMFI (*Yayasan Masyarakat Film Indonesia*). Indeed, at the early stage both of the organisations were difficult to see as two separate entities. Some activities such as workshops and screenings were done under the JIFFest banner before being continued by In-Docs after it was established in 2002. Therefore In-Docs and JIFFest are used interchangeably, especially in discussing the period 1999 to 2002.

JIFFest was established in 1999 by an Indonesian filmmaker and producer Shanty Harmayn and a Franco-American film producer Natascha Devillers. From the beginning, it screened documentary films[1], which would later develop into a semi-regular event conducted by In-Docs as part of their effort to introduce documentary film to the Indonesian public. This began documentary exhibition in venues open to the public in theatrical settings, shifting from the tradition of screening

[1] Shanty Harmayn, interview with the author, 7 September 2017.

documentaries as campaigns that have been done by non-government organisations (NGOs) prior to JIFFest.

Another important impact of In-Docs on documentary film culture in Indonesia is training and workshops in documentary filmmaking. In fact, In-Docs was established based on concerns about the quality of documentary film in Indonesia at that time and with the intention to provide training to improve the filmmaking skills of Indonesian documentary filmmakers. At that time, the documentary that existed was dominated by NGO production for campaign purposes[2]. These documentaries were mainly dominated by exposition of issues and problems to argue for policy change. Therefore, they lacked depth of character development and were simplistic in visual language[3]. Based on this motivation, In-Docs would provide training for filmmakers and improve the environment for documentary filmmaking to make it more supportive for producing 'good quality' documentaries. In-Docs co-founder Shanty Harmayn defines this In-Docs role as a 'service organisation', where it was established to improve the documentary film scene in Indonesia[4].

It is interesting to note that my main respondents for this chapter, Shanty Harmayn and documentary filmmaker Abduh Aziz, in separate interviews, refused to use the term 'documentary film culture' for the general situation of documentary film in Indonesia, as they insisted that the culture is not yet established. They prefer to call

---

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.* See also Abduh Aziz. "Abduh Aziz: Tentang Sejarah, Filem, Dokumenter, Video Komunitas dan Cita-cita Perfilman" (Abduh Aziz: On History, Film, Documentary, Community Video, and Aspirations), interview by Hafiz and Akbar Yumni in *Jurnal Footage*, 12 March 2010, accessed 10 December 2018, http://jurnalfootage.net/v4/abduh-azis-tentang-sejarah-filem-dokumenter-video-komunitas-dan-cita-cita-perfileman/. (My translation).

[4] Harmayn, interview, 2017.

it a 'documentary film scene' to imply unstable institutions that are still in the making. They share the view that 'culture' should be seen as something established and final rather than in a process of becoming, while 'scene' is considered to describe something that is in process[5]. This thesis argues against the idea of a separation between a 'scene' (for something in the process) and a 'culture' (as something stable), because culture - including the concept itself - is seen as always in process rather than as something final or belonging to the past.

Therefore, as research into culture in the process of becoming, this chapter elaborates the process of development of In-Docs and documentary film culture in Indonesia and how publicness is part of that process. This is done in a few steps. First, I provide a historical account of documentary film in Indonesia and the political openness that came in 1998, to show how they come together to lay the ground for the development of documentary film practices that have been quite different than the ones in the New Order era. Second, I analyse In-Docs' history to show its institutional development and entanglement with its context, including with the now-defunct Jakarta International Film Festival (JIFFest). Third, In-Docs' recent activities and events are closely observed to examine the way the organisation has operated and developed until now. All of these steps are done to show the types of publicness that emerge from the development of documentary film culture through the interaction of these organisations and their surroundings.

[5] *Ibid.* Also Abduh Aziz, interview with the author, 16 November 2016.

Historical background

During the Dutch colonial era, documentaries were produced by the Dutch administration mostly as documentation of social and political life in the colony. Sometimes, documentaries were made to inform the general public on topics such as general public health and hygiene, especially to avoid endemic 'plague'[6]. This type of public health information film was very famous, it became a subject of ridicule among documentary filmmakers whenever public information documentaries circulated. They would call this type of film '*film pes*' ('plague films').[7] Since the early years of its existence in Indonesia, documentary film has come into popular parlance as instructions to the general public rather than a work with its distinct artistic values.

After independence, documentary film production could be traced back to *Berita Film Indonesia* (Indonesian Newsreel or BFI), a state-owned newsreel production company based in Yogyakarta, which originally was taken over from *Nippon Eiga Sha*, a film company whose main task was to produce propaganda film for the Japanese Occupation in Indonesia[8]. BFI was disbanded and its workers joined the Jakarta based state-owned film company, *Pusat Produksi Film Negara* (Centre for Film Production or PFN)[9], which was established in 1950 and taken over from the Dutch film company,

---

[6] See Ade Suryani. "Sejarah dan Perkembangan Film Dokumentari Indonesia, 1908-2008 (History and Development of Indonesian Documentary Film, 1900-2008)" (Bachelor's degree thesis, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2009).

[7] Budi Irawanto, "Beyond Big Dramatic Moments," 111.

[8] Gotot Prakosa, *Film Pinggiran: Antologi Film Pendek, Film Eksperimental dan Film Dokumenter.* (*Marginal Films: Anthology of Short, Experimental and Documentary Film*) (Jakarta: FFTV-IKJ and YLP, 1997), 181. (My translation)

[9] *Ibid*.

Java Pacific Film[10]. PFN stopped producing fiction film in 1962[11] and focused on documentary and newsreels, which were distributed throughout the country and screened in movie theatres before fiction films[12]. These newsreels and documentaries were also screened in non-theatrical open air cinema setting (or *layar tancap)* distributed through *Perkumpulan Bioskop Keliling Indonesia* (Indonesian Mobile Cinema Association or Perbiki)[13].

The documentaries and newsreels produced by PFN were mostly about government official's activities, economic development, state ceremonies, the arrival of international guests and other public information service[14]. These were produced under the name of *Gelora Indonesia* (Zeal of Indonesia)[15]. Many researchers[16] call this series "*Gelora Pembangunan*" (Zeal of Development). Most likely the source for this name is Gotot Prakoso's 1997 book, *Film Pinggiran,* which is the only well-circulated book written about documentary film in Indonesia. I believe Prakoso calls this as "*Pembangunan*" (Development) in his book instead of "Indonesia" because most (if not all) of the subject matter is about the nation's economic achievements. He mentions in his book that the existence of this type of documentary was understandable because 'development is everywhere' and the people should be

---

[10] "Sejarah PFN," (History of PFN), PFN, Produksi Film Negara, accessed 12 December 2018, http://www.pfn.co.id/sejarah.html. (My translation).

[11] Sen, *Indonesian Cinema* 65.

[12] Prakosa, *Film Pinggiran,* 184.

[13] Imanjaya, "The Cultural Traffic," 82.

[14] Srie Atmano. *Katalog Film-film Produksi PFN 1962-1968.* (*PFN Film Catalogue 1962 – 1968*). (Jakarta: Pusat Film Negara, 1969), 6-30. (My translation).

[15] *Ibid*.

[16] See for example in Van Heeren. *Contemporary Indonesian Film*, 88.

informed about it[17]. The catalogue issued by PFN in 1969 calls this series *Gelora Indonesia*[18]. Regardless of the name, the documentaries were mostly about national development, as elaborated by a Dutch researcher, Katinka Van Heeren:

> The object of the documentary was to depict the success of some development project or the exoticism of the preferably remote area, or a combination of both. All was accompanied by a voice over, using a particular documentary pitch, with some cheery music typically associated with this type of film.[19]

This narrative model became the norm for Indonesian documentary makers at that time, and when documentaries went to television during the New Order, this model remained the same[20].

During the New Order there was only one television station, the state-owned station, Televisi Republik Indonesia or TVRI. It was established in 1962 as part of Indonesia's preparation to hold Asian Games in Jakarta. At one point in the 1980s there was an increasing demand for newsreels and documentaries from government agencies to be aired on TVRI, which became a business opportunity for film lecturers and students of the only film school in Indonesia at that time, Fakutas Film dan Televisi *Institut Kesenian Jakarta* (Faculty of Film and Television of the Jakarta Institute of Art or IKJ). The dean of the faculty established an institution called *Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan Sinematografi* (Cinematography Research and Development Agency or BP2S) to serve this rising demand, and the profit was meant

---

[17] Prakoso, *Film Pinggiran*, 185.

[18] Atmano, *Katalog Film-film*, 6.

[19] van Heeren, *Contemporary,* 89.

[20] Prakoso, *Film Pinggiran*, 185.

to purchase equipment for the school[21]. This particular institution under IKJ had produced in total 14 documentary films, mostly directed by David Albert Peransi[22].

Peransi was part of a movement at IKJ established by its students and graduates to experiment on film and audio-visual media. In 1974, Peransi and some other IKJ students initiated an experimental film festival called *Festival Film Mini* (Short Film Festival) to welcome 8 mm film[23]. They screened short, experimental, animation and short documentary films[24] and then established a group called *Kelompok Sinema Delapan* (Eight Cinema Group) to experiment with 8 millimetre film[25] (hence the name "eight"). Most of the subject matters of Peransi's documentaries were environmental issues, transmigration, and socio-cultural problems[26]. Peransi was aware of documentary film's potential to fulfil the idea of 'cultural education', a general directive from the New Order government to the filmmakers in the 1980s to produce films with educational values[27]. This directive was mostly meant for fiction

---

[21] *Ibid,* 188.

[22] Garin Nugroho and Dyna Herlyna. *Krisis dan Paradoks Film Indonesia (Crisis and Paradox of Indonesian Film*), (Jakarta: Kompas, 2015), 174. (My translation). See also Prakoso, *Film Pinggiran*, 188.

[23] Another notable name from this group was Hadi Purnomo who made politically-engaged documentary about land dispossession, and was stopped from making film in 1991 because of his criticism of the government. Some other names were, Johan Teranggi, and Dea Sudarman who were known for their works for international broadcasters and companies. See Prakosa, *Film Pinggiran*, 2.

[24] *Ibid.*

[25] *Ibid,* 3.

[26] Prakoso mentions such titles as: *Cinta Kasih dan Harapan* (*Love and Hope*), *Wayang Golek* (*Shadow Play*), *Wayang Kulit Purwa* (*Ancient Shadow Puppet*), *Jakarta Kota Pariwisata* (*Jakarta the City of Tourism*), *Perkembangan dan Pengembangan Seni Budaya di Jakarta* (*Progress and Development of Art and Culture in Jakarta*), *Paru-paru Hijau* (*Green Belts*), *Problem Sosial di DKI* (*Jakarta's Social Problems*), *Tanjung Priok Membenah Diri* (*Tanjung Priok Self-Refurbishment*), *STM Pembangunan* (*Vocational College of Development*) and *Transmigration* (*Inter-Islands Migration*). See Prakoso, *Film Pinggiran*, 188.

[27] van Heeren, *Contemporary*, 43.

film producers[28]. Instead, Peransi has taken over this idea of cultural and educational values as he believes that documentary films are capable of "opening new perspectives (cultural function) while at the same time exposing new facts for learning and observation"[29]. Peransi's argument was made to assert the importance of documentaries, because documentary films and the makers were considered as, in Peransi's word: "*anak tiri"* (stepchildren) compared to fiction filmmakers[30] indicating their marginal position and unfavourable treatment. Peransi explains this:

> The attention of the public and film institutions has been directed to feature films, maybe because these films are more glamorous. Meanwhile they forget about documentary film, which is essentially the cultural-educational film.[31]

Peransi was appealing for attention to be given to documentary film using a lexicon that popular in the context of *film nasional* or "national film" in 1980s. *Film nasional*, more than just the Indonesian phrase for national cinema, is a concept that has been employed by the government, filmmakers, critics, film institutions and even in popular parlance in Indonesia as "a nationalist project with both material and cultural aspirations" to define what Indonesian film is[32] and its first day was later

---

[28] *Ibid*.

[29] "*Membuka perspektif-perspektif baru (kultural) dan sekaligus memaparkan kenyataan-kenyaatan untuk dipelajari dan ditelaah*" (my translation). See D.A. Peransi, "*Film Dokumenter di Indonesia (Beberapa Pokok Pikiran)* ("Documentary Film in Indonesia, Some Initial Thoughts") in *DA Peransi dan Film (DA Peransi and Film*), (ed.) Marseli Sumarno (Jakarta: Lembaga Studi Film, n.t), 43.

[30] *Ibid*.

[31] *Perhatian masyarakat dan lembaga-lembaga yang mengurusi film lebih tertuju pada film cerita, mungkin karena film cerita lebih glamur [sic], sementara dilupakan bahwa film dokumenter pada hakekatnya adalah apa yang disebut film kultural edukatif. Ibid*, 41.

[32] Thomas Barker, "Historical Inheritance and Film Nasional in Post-Reformasi Indonesian Cinema," in *Asian Cinema*, 21, no. 2 (September 2010): 12.

officiated by a presidential decree in 1999 based on inputs from people in film industry[33].

Based on this idea, Peransi then suggested the government to establish an independent body to support documentary filmmaking, while the filmmakers should start making documentaries with an anthropological approach to document people of certain ethnicities and tribes[34], as he saw this format had potential for instigating socio-cultural dialogue[35]. Peransi suggested the government and documentary filmmakers, which he called 'intellectuals', make documentary films beyond propaganda[36]. Peransi's appeal was the earliest one made to posit documentary films as having distinct artistic value and not merely falling under the needs of giving instructions to the general public.

These anthropological documentaries as suggested and made by Peransi and his peers then receded into obscurity as they had not been circulated beyond the TVRI or the festival at IKJ. They did not make any impression on the public at large, and most of the documentary programmes at TVRI were still dominated by in-house productions and PFN[37]. The general impression about documentary film in Indonesia

---

[33] See Presidential Decree No. 25, year 1999 about Film Nasional Day. (Keputusan Presiden No. 25 tahun 1999). The National Film Day is actually decided based on the first day of the shooting of *Long March*, a 1950's film directed by Usmar Ismail with Asrul Sani as screenwriter. Both names become famous as the "founding fathers" of Indonesian cinema. Film has been made in Indonesia since 1926 and screened since 1900 but this date is decided for its connotation with its ethno-nationalistic spirit and resistance against colonialism. See Barker, *Ibid*, 7-24.

[34] Peransi, "Film Dokumenter," 45.

[35] *Ibid.*

[36] *Ibid.*

[37] Prakoso, *Film Pinggiran,* 185.

was still dominated by the view that it was equal to propaganda[38]. Even in the 1990s, when commercial TV stations started to broadcast in Indonesia, they were reluctant to develop documentary programming based on the same view[39].

Therefore, it is not surprising that documentary film during the New Order era, even at its best, has been criticised for its 'touristic view' and having a tendency to 'exoticisation'[40]. This evaluation of the touristic view comes from the distant portrayal of particular ethnic groups (mostly minority ethnicities and tribes) with their distinctive features presented to the national audience. The camera portrays them in their day-to-day life and then the activities are explained as something unique belonging to the tribe's culture[41]. Scholar Budi Irawanto attributes these documentary styles to the New Order regime that had monopolised documentary production and distribution, creating a homogenised tradition of documentary film, both in subject matters and aesthetics[42].

This view of documentary film which was equal to government propaganda and 'travelogue' once dominated the public perception of documentary film, making it stay in a marginal place[43]. Artistic explorations of documentary film and exhibition platforms had been limited, causing documentary film not to get proper attention from the public at large until the 1990s, when resources from the non-profit sector have opened a bigger space for documentary film production and circulation that

---

[38] van Hereen, *Contemporary Indonesian Film,* 89.

[39] Prakoso, *Film Pinggiran,* 190.

[40] Irawanto, "Beyond Big Dramatic Moments," 133.

[41] *Ibid*.

[42] *Ibid*.

[43] *Ibid,* 109-110.

lead into the beginning of a new documentary film culture in Indonesia, as will be discussed below.

Documentary and *Reformasi*

This section will discuss a different tradition in documentary film, both aesthetically and institutionally, which was started by an IKJ graduate, Garin Nugroho, who later became one of the most decorated filmmakers in Indonesia. Nugroho is considered to have started a new direction where he produced documentary films with artistic quality regardless of whether the original intention was to use documentary as campaign material. He also started a new institutional model, a non-government organisation or NGO, non-profit organisation that operates with the premise of contributing to the society at large with their social activities. This institutional model was later copied by other filmmakers, including In-Docs. What Nugroho has done was to follow the experiments that had been conducted earlier by Peransi and Kelompok Sinema Delapan, but he expanded them by institutionalising the experiments into an organisation that opened a new direction for documentary film culture to grow, which was to link it into funding mechanism in non-profit sector and international philanthropic and donor organisations.

Scholar Budi Irawanto calls Nugroho as a "pioneer in combating the New Order's aesthetics of documentary film"[44], and Nugroho's documentary film has made a different impression, as elaborated by an academic from Monash University, Australia, David Hanan, who discusses Nugroho's 1991s documentary *Air dan Romi*

[44] *Ibid*. pp.113-114.

(*Water and Romi*). [45]. *Air dan Romi* is a short documentary about the appalling conditions of water pollution in Jakarta from the point of view of three poor people who struggle to live in the city's slum area. The subject matter – the depiction of poverty and environmental problems in Jakarta – was unusual for documentary films in the New Order era, and Hanan also noted that the aesthetics were very intriguing compared to its contemporaries. This documentary worked as a 'poetic' documentary where movement and flow becomes the centre of the aesthetics[46]. The day-to-day activities of the three subjects are depicted without narrative interventions, and they do not talk to the people behind the camera throughout the film. This approach was totally different to documentaries aired at TVRI, which were dominated by voice-overs and excessive explanation about what happened on the screen. Hanan considered the voices of the subject in Nugroho's *Air dan Romi* as "dignified commentary over shots of their own daily activities[47]". This artistic style was very uncommon at that time, making Japanese critic and film programmer Kenji ishizaka, in an interview with Nugroho, produce a very strong remark about *Air dan Romi* especially compared to documentary film in the New Order era:

> …there's hardly any difference in eye level between you as filmmaker and the filmed subject of your gaze. As you said, if you make a documentary badly, then be it propaganda or enlightening, it will still be about those on top teaching the weak at the bottom. Your work has an exceedingly level gaze,

[45] David Hanan, "The Films of Garin Nugroho, Political Documentaries and Essay Films by Garin Nugroho in Late New Order and Post Reformasi Indonesia" in *Screening Southeast Asia*, *Spectator*, 24, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 43.

[46] *Ibid*.

[47] *Ibid.*

> and features society's weak and oppressed. I have never seen anything like this in other Indonesian films from the Suharto era.[48]

The documentary had a political impact, as there was an attempt from the Indonesian Intelligence Service to ban it and destroy the Betacam master[49]. However, the film has never been banned and it was screened on various occasions, including JIFFest and in a special event in 2009[50], demonstrating that the master survives. *Air dan Romi* was commissioned by the Goethe Institute[51] - an international organisation under the German government – for a seminar about water and environment in Indonesia. Nugroho produced this under the banner of SET Film Workshop[52] a production house he established in 1987 with some other filmmakers of IKJ graduates, such as Arturo GP[53].

This SET Workshop is actually a production house that produces feature films and a variety of audio-visual materials for various clients, such as public service announcements, television commercials, music videos, and company profiles[54]. The trend to establish production houses was quite common in the late 1980s when the government had just started to let commercial private-owned television stations

---

[48] Garin Nugroho, "An Interview with Garin Nugroho," Ishizaka Kenji, in *Docbox Yamagata International Film Festival*, accessed 6 December 2018, https://www.yidff.jp/docbox/14/box14-2-1-e.html.

[49] Hanan, "The Films of Garin Nugroho", 43.

[50] Anonymous, "Perayaan Hari Bumi dan World Cinema Features @kineforum" (Celebration of the Earth Day and World Cinema Features @kineforum), in *Kineforum*, 20 April 2009, accessed on 12 October 2017, https://kineforum.wordpress.com/2009/04/20/pemutaran-film-dalam-rangka-hari-bumi/.

[51] Hanan, "The Films of Garin Nugroho", 43.

[52] Nugroho, "An Interview with Garin Nugroho"

[53] "Sains Estetika Teknologi" (Science, Aesthetics and Techlogy), SET Film Workshop, accessed on 15 October 2017 http://setfilmworkshop.blogspot.co.uk/p/sains-estetika-teknologi.html. (My translation)

[54] *Ibid*.

broadcast in Indonesia in 1987[55]. During these early years of the television industry boom, there was a massive exodus from film studios and filmmakers to work for television stations[56] with a few filmmakers deciding to start their own production house, such as former member of Kelompok Sinema Delapan Johan Teranggi who established PT Cinevisi Inc. to produce documentary for private companies and foreign broadcast[57].

SET Workshop is not dissimilar to other production houses that anticipated the boom in the audio-visual industry. But it has taken another direction with its non-profit branch to cater to the needs that were growing along with civil society development after the 1998 political change. After Suharto fell, a general election took place in 1999 and Nugroho was, according to his own words, "actively participating in guarding the 1999 election from any frauds to happen again like what happened during the Suharto era."[58] For that purpose, Nugroho claims "SET Workshop that I led has changed into an NGO (non-government organisation), to coordinate 15 other NGOs that work in the area of democracy"[59]. For this purpose, SET Film Workshop established a non-profit wing called *Yayasan SET* (SET Foundation) that was supported by international donors and non-government organisations such as USAID (United States), HIVOS (The Netherlands) and TIFA Foundation (part of Soros

---

[55] Ade Armando, *Televisi Indonesia di Bawah Kapitalisme Global (Indonesian Television Under Global Capitalism*), (Jakarta: Kompas, 2016), 149. (My translation).

[56] Thomas Barker, "A Cultural Economy," 72.

[57] *Ibid*.

[58] "Saya secara aktif turut menjaga Pemilu 1999 agar tidak mengulangi berbagai kecurangan pemilu saat Soeharto masih berkuasa." Nugroho and Herlyna. *Krisis dan Paradoks*, 250.

[59] *Ibid*.

Foundation in Indonesia)[60]. SET Workshop regards those tasks as their 'public role', and then after the election continued its work to cover subjects such as civic education, promoting multiculturalism, developing democratisation in broadcasting and the production of audio-visual materials in general[61]. Nugroho claims following his step, especially in the 2000s, many filmmakers established their non-profit wing or NGO to get funding to produce films and documentaries through this non-profit funding mechanism[62].

This dual face of SET Workshop has made it able to seek funding from the 'non-profit sector', rather than rely only on commercial sources for its business. This is possible because many international NGOs and philanthropic organisations who fund documentary film activities require their partners to be non-profit institutions rather than a commercial entity. Based on the belief that this partnership is part of forging partnerships with civil society, NGOs and international civil society organisations, charity and philanthropic organisations have poured money to work with these organisations on themes such as community development, democratisation, capacity building and other non-commercial causes[63]. In the case of SET, under the wing of the non-profit arm, it has been then able to recruit novice and aspiring filmmakers to do an internship with them, giving them a taste of involvement in real filmmaking. SET has done this since it was first established and this is also applies to the fiction film

---

[60] "Sains Estetika dan Teknologi (SET)," ANSA-EAP, accessed on 16 October 2017, http://www.ansa-eap.net/networking/geographic-focus/java-conveners-group-indonesia/country-partners/sains-estetika-dan-teknologi-set/. (My translation)

[61] "Sains, Estetika dan Teknologi" (Science, Aesthetics and Technology)," SET Film Workshop.

[62] Nugroho and Herlyna, *Krisis dan Paradoks*, 250.

[63] For example see Hans Antlöv, Derick W. Birkehoff and Elke Rapp, "Civil society capacity building for democratic reform: Experience and lessons from Indonesia" in *Voluntas*, 21 (May 2010): 417-439.

projects, workshops and festivals it organises[64]. This division between the profit and non-profit arm has become a model that been followed by many other filmmakers, such as Shanty Harmayn with YMMFI (JIFFest and In-Docs) and Nia Dinata with Kalyana Shira Foundation[65].

The non-profit face of these organisations become a starting point for documentary film culture to thrive in Indonesia post-1998, as they then collaborate with various local and international NGOs, foreign funding agencies (as part of foreign embassies such as USAID or DFID), and international philanthropic organisations who were looking for partners to work in audio-visual media as part of institutionalising democracy in Indonesia in the post-authoritarian setting. These international organisations are required to work with local non-profit counterparts and they turned to NGOs such as SET, In-Docs and Kalyana Shira. This NGO form had been very important because at one point during the New Order, NGOs became equated with civil society in Indonesia in a situation where political institutions such as opposition political parties were controlled tightly[66]. This view remains strong in the post-authoritarian Indonesia as openness suddenly happened along with the idea that citizen participation and civic engagement should be developed in the public sphere;

---

[64] "About LA Lights Indimovie," LA Lights Indiemovie, accessed 16 October 2017, http://enjoyindiemovie.blogspot.com/p/about-la-lights-indiemovie.html. (My translation)

[65] "*Tentang Kami*" (About Us), Kalyana Shira Foundation, accessed 18 October 2017, http://www.kalyanashirafound.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=section&layout=blog&id=7&Itemid=88&lang=en. (My translation)

[66] Hans Antlöv, Rustam Ibrahim, and Peter van Tuijl, "NGO Governance and Accountability in Indonesia: Challenges in a Newly Democratizing Country," in *NGO Accountability: Politics, Principles and Innovation* (ed.) Lisa Jordan and Peter van Tuijl (London: Earthscan, 2006), 150.

these NGOs were considered to be the proper partners for advancing political reform[67].

Since then, this model has become a strong alternative for documentary film production and training in Indonesia. Under this narrative, funding for these organisations can be channelled from the non-profit sector, which in turn develops documentary film culture in Indonesia. Therefore, the development of documentary film culture in Indonesia is directly connected with the narrative of building up civil society and advancing political reform in Indonesia. How the organisational format has enabled the growth of documentary film culture that also comes together with the idea of civic engagement in the context of civil society in Indonesia is discussed in the next section below.

The beginning of In-Docs

This section starts with the entanglement of In-Docs as an organisation with the context that gave birth to it, to examine the way documentary film culture has grown in post-authoritarian Indonesia. It focuses on two main activities: documentary film exhibition and workshops on documentary filmmaking. Documentary film exhibition is discussed to show two points: first, it shows the political tensions that still exist in post-authoritarian Indonesia regardless of the *Reformasi*. Documentary film exhibition becomes part of civil society's struggle to get rid of the remnants of the old political regime and to open up the space for documentary film culture to grow. Second, through the exhibition platforms, documentary film, especially artistic

[67] Antlöv, Birkehoff and Rapp, "Civil Society Capacity Building," 417-439.

documentary, starts to get exposure and has become part of public culture. Later, the need for artistic documentary films is used as the ground for conducting workshops on documentary filmmaking by In-Docs.

In-Docs was born as part of JIFFest, the first international film festival conducted by Yayasan Masyarakat Mandiri Film Indonesia (The Society of Independent Film Foundation or YMMFI), the organisation that also initiated In-Docs. As a foundation, YMMFI is a non-profit organisation and run on non-profit basis. It officially falls under category of non-government organisation or NGO, and in its official documents such as reports and contracts In-Docs is always under YMMFI. The number of the core staff of the Foundation has been relatively small (two or three for In-Docs and a slightly bigger number whenever they held JIFFest)[68] and sometimes they work for both organisations. YMMFI was founded by Shanty Harmayn, who holds a master's degree in documentary film from Stanford University, Palo Alto, California. JIFFest was the first international film festival organised by civil society in Indonesia. It began in 1999, screening more than 100 films, comprised of international films, Indonesian films, short and long documentaries and experimental films. It reached its peak in 2006 when it became the one of the biggest film festivals in Southeast Asia with 63,009 attendance[69], but it stopped in 2010 to 2012. In 2013 JIFFest was run again, until it was totally stopped in 2014 because of lack of funding. This section will discuss the documentary screenings in JIFFest as one of the earliest exhibition platforms that screened documentary film in post-1998 Indonesia. The festival itself will be

[68] Anonymous, *YMMFI Capacity Building Program* (Jakarta: PT Binaman Utama, 2012), 8.

[69] Abduh Aziz, "*Evaluasi Yayasan Masyarakat Mandiri Film Indonesia* (YMMFI)" (Evaluation of YMMFI), Unpublishe. January 2011, 16. (My translation)

discussed further in the next chapter about Festival Film Dokumenter (FFD) Yogyakarta.

The screening of documentary film in JIFFest has contributed to the new cinema culture in Indonesia, as it enables Indonesian film audiences and filmmakers alike to watch documentary films in a theatrical setting[70]. As mentioned before, documentary films, apart from instructional public interest films, were rarely screened in any movie theatres. From the first year in 1999, JIFFest screened Indonesian documentaries[71]. In 2001 JIFFest began a section called The House of Docs for screening international and Indonesian documentaries, making such screening to be a regular staple for the festival. One of JIFFest's programmers, Dian Herdiany, who later became In-Docs programme manager, selected the Indonesian documentaries, while the international ones were selected by JIFFest co-founders Shanty Harmayn and Natascha Devillers, but this division was never strict[72], showing the entanglement between JIFFest and In-Docs. However, from this 2001 event, JIFFest started to proactively seek documentary films with artistic quality, and this was continued by In-Docs when it was established in 2002.

House of Doc managed to screen some less-distributed Indonesian documentary films and it created a sense of novelty and discovery for Indonesian audiences, as demonstrated by a reaction from novice filmmaker Yuli Andari. Andari claimed that she was intrigued by documentaries made by Lexy Rambadetta such as *Mass Grave*

---

[70] Abduh Aziz, interview, 2016.

[71] Dian Herdiany, interview with the author, 12 August 2016.

[72] Harmayn and Devillers still had the final say on the selection but the process was done in a discussion rather than voting. Herdiany, interview, 2017 and Harmayn, interview, 2017.

(2001) and *The Indonesian Comfort Women: A Video of Testimony* (2001) because of the politically difficult subject matter[73]. The amazement was described by Andari:

> When I first watched Lexy's documentary, I saw a new way to deliver messages, especially the ones that were sensitive and rarely reported by mainstream media. This spirit inspired me much[74].

The amazement comes from the novelty of the format and also from the issues that were foregrounded by the documentaries, especially with *Mass Grave*, which tells a story about the finding of a mass grave as a proof of the massacre that happened to Indonesian Communist Party members and sympathisers in 1965 to 1966[75]. This subject matter had been very sensitive during the New Order and public discussion about this was almost impossible[76]. Therefore, screening of a documentary film with this subject matter without any disturbance in the early years after *Reformasi* came as a surprise for the audience.

However, documentary screening in JIFFest 2006 became a test for this post-authoritarian setting, as some documentary films were considered to be "too sensitive" for Indonesian audiences[77]. Four documentaries were banned by the *Lembaga Sensor Film* (Indonesian Censorship Bureau, or LSF) the institution established during the New Order to censor films and generally to control what can

---

[73] Yuli Andari is interviewed by academic, Novi Kurnia in Novi Kurnia, "Writing, documentary films, and everything in between, A conversation with Yuli Andari," in *Indonesian Women Filmmakers,* (ed.) Yvonne Michalik (Berlin: regiospectra, 2013), 125.

[74] *Ibid*. p.215

[75] See Chapter 2 on a glance about the 1965-66 killings.

[76] See for example Robert W. Goodfellow, "*Sing Wis Ya Wis*: What is Past is Past. Forgetting What It Was To Remember The Indonesian Killing of 1965," (PhD thesis, University of Wollongong, 2013). 6-14.

[77] Anonymous, "A Fifth Documentary is banned at Jakarta Film Festival," in *Reporters Without Borders*, 24 December 2006, accessed 22 October 2017 https://rsf.org/en/news/fifth-documentary-banned-jakarta-film-festival.

be screened in Indonesia and still in operation today. These documentaries were *The Black Road* (directed by William Nessen, 2005), *Tales of Crocodiles* (directed by Jan Van Den Berg, 2002), *Passabe* (directed by James Leon) and *Timor Loro Sae* (directed by Lucelia Santos, 2001)[78]. The subject matters of these documentaries are the separatist movements and armed conflicts involving the Indonesian military in areas known for political tensions such as East Timor and Aceh[79]. The banning of the documentaries created controversies and JIFFest Programme Manager, Lalu Roisamri, protested the LSF decision, calling it "disappointing and showing the true nature of the government that remains authoritarian"[80]. YMMFI, the umbrella organisation for both JIFFest and In-Docs, suggested the documentaries be screened for limited audiences, by invitation only, "followed by a discussion with experts to talk about the issues surrounding the films, regardless their political stands[81]". For YMMFI, this limited screening was considered to be "the best opportunity to broaden and enrich audiences with a healthy and democratic political education"[82], however, LSF had never considered this option[83].

The reason behind the ban, according to the LSF Chairperson, Titi Said, was because one the films is full of depictions of the violence and cruelty of the

---

[78] *Ibid*.

[79] *Ibid.*

[80] Zaki Amrullah, "*Film tentang Aceh dan Timor dilarang di Jiffest*" (Films about Aceh and East Timor are banned at Jiffest), in *DW*, 28 November 2006, accessed 22 October 2017, http://www.dw.com/id/film-tentang-aceh-dan-timor-dilarang-di-jiffest/a-2958011.(My translation)

[81] YMMFI. *Report from YMMFI Programs 2006-2007 to The Ford Foundation*. (Unpublished), 13.

[82] *Ibid*, 13.

[83] Varadila, interview, 15 January 2018.

Indonesian military (TNI), and the public (*masyarakat*) is not ready for such scenes[84].

In her statement to the media, Said specified the reason for the banning:

> We don't want to affect our good relations with East Timor and we believe it is important to guard the success of the peace process in Aceh," she said. "The festival is open to the public and we have to protect our public[85].

Meanwhile, one of the LSF members, Johan Darmadi, claimed that the documentaries had tarnished (*menjelek-jelekkan*) Indonesia, and it was not LSF's business to get involved in that. Darmadi was quoted by the media as saying:

> Don't ask us to legalise the film... if you want to do [screen] it underground, we don't care. But if we have to legalise it, that means we give blessing [to the content]. LSF do not have any political consideration, except [we are working based on] conscience, ethical considerations; and the film is screened in our country, Indonesia.[86]

The narrative of the banning of these documentaries shows the limit of publicness in post-authoritarian Indonesia. Said mentioned "to protect the public", regardless of YMMFI's suggestion to screen the documentaries for a limited audience as part of a discussion about the issues. YMMFI had to accept the banning, and LSF's power to ban film based on one-sided perceptions about "protecting the public" remained intact.

Later YMMFI – represented by Lalu Roisamri, the director of JIFFest – joined Masyarakat Film Indonesia (Indonesian Film Society or MFI), a movement instigated

---

[84] Elin Yunita Kristanti, "*Black Road, film soal Aceh yang juga dilarang*" (Black Road, the banned film about Aceh), in *Viva*, 2 December 2009, accessed on 22 October 2017 http://www.viva.co.id/berita/nasional/110645-black-road-film-soal-aceh-yang-juga-dilarang.(My translation)

[85] John Aglionby, "Indonesia Bans Separatism Films", *Financial Times*, 28 November 2006, accessed 15 April 2017 http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/35adaa90-7e86-11db-84bb-0000779e2340.html?ft_site=falcon&desktop=true#axzz4eV0b11Yl.

[86] Zaki Amrullah, "Film tentang Aceh".

by filmmakers and film activists, and went to the Constitutional Court to try to revoke the censorship regulations and change it into a classification system based on the freedom of information that is guaranteed by Article 28 of the Constitution. The court ruled to keep the censorship regulations to avoid a legal void, with a note that the next film law must take into consideration of freedom of expression in any regulations regarding film circulation in Indonesia[87]. However, when the new film law was passed by the parliament in 2009, the articles about censorship remained the same and this has been overshadowing film distribution and exhibition in Indonesia.

The episode of the documentary banning in JIFFest has shown an example of contestation of the notion of "public" in the public sphere shortly after *Reformasi* where a government body was trying to dominate the meaning of "publicness" and the public while JIFFest foregrounded an alternative to the monolithic interpretation of the public. This is based on the assumption of single public sphere and contestation happened in that sphere that leads into public deliberation, in this case is in the form of censorship certificate for the films in question. The contestation between the state apparatus and the civil society organisation in this case did not happen in 'counterpublic' sphere but rather to be part of the civil society participation in political deliberation through Habermasian model debates in cultural public sphere that leads into decision in political public sphere.

Besides amazement at the subject matters, the documentary screenings at JIFFest have also made the public aware of documentary artistic values. Documentary films screened at JIFFest managed to be the most watched films in JIFFest for 1999 and

[87] Intan Paramaditha, "The Wild Child's Desire," 6.

2002. In 1999 *Jalan Raya Pos* (*Post Boulevard*, directed by Bernie IJdis, 1996), a documentary about the famous Indonesian author, Pramoedya Ananta Toer, become the most watched film. In JIFFest 2002, *War Photographer* (directed by Christian Frei, 2001) became the most watched film, even outperforming the opening film, Golden Lion Winner at 2001 Venice Film Festival, *Monsoon Wedding* (directed by Mira Nair, 2001)[88]. JIFFest 2002 also noted a new record by screening a total of 38 documentary films[89]. The late Abduh Aziz, a filmmaker who later became a consultant for various In-Docs activities, said the success of *War Photographer* became the ground for establishing In-Docs[90] and it was a kind of turning point for Indonesian filmmakers, such as himself, to believe that documentary films in Indonesia have already got their audience[91]. In Aziz's words:

> There had been the passion, there had been growth, but we didn't have any structure. Therefore, we created In-Docs. We started training, by inviting some renowned filmmakers such as Harun Farocki[92].

Aziz, a graduate from the History Department of the University of Indonesia, has worked as a researcher for some IKJ graduated documentary filmmakers to produce documentaries commissioned by government agencies[93], and at one point he also worked for SET Film Workshop as producer and researcher for Nugroho's films, and later as programme manager for SET Foundation before establishing his own

---

[88] JIFFest, "Statistics on the 1st to 9th JIFFest", an annex to 9th Jakarta International Film Festival 2007, Official Report, December 7-16, 2007." (Jakarta: JIFFest, 2007).

[89] YMMFI. "Narrative Report to Ford Foundation. Grant No.1025-0225." (Jakarta: YMMFI).

[90] Aziz, interview, 2016.

[91] *Ibid*.

[92] *"Kita lihat passion-nya ada, pertumbuhannya ada, tapi kita ngga punya struktur. Makanya kita bikin In-Docs. Kita mulai training, ngundang beberapa filmmaker terkenal seperti Harun Farocki.*" *Ibid*.

[93] *Ibid.*

company, *Cangkir Kopi* (Cup of Coffee) that produces documentary films, company profiles, and others.

Aziz said the effect of documentary films introduced by JIFFest was significant in opening up a new approach to documentary film narratives. He explains that this new approach went beyond providing explanations of issues using voice-overs[94]. According to Aziz, these documentaries have opened up a space for contemplation, which in turn enables contributing to collective consciousness or collective experience for its public, which is the most important role of documentary film[95]. Arguably, since JIFFest introduced these documentary films, artistic quality has become the main consideration both for audiences to watch and for filmmakers in documentary filmmaking. This has complemented the idea of documentary film as explanation to the general public that has been known since the New Order era.

The documentary screenings at House of Docs was an important platform for Indonesian documentary filmmakers, as there were no documentary films screened to the general public in a theatrical setting after 1998[96]. The only exception was in 2002, when a short documentary (43 minutes) titled *Student Movement in Indonesia: The Army Forced Them to be Violent* (directed by Tino Saroengallo) managed to be screened by a major cinema chain, the 21 Group[97]. Even until now, there have been

---

[94] *Ibid.*

[95] Aziz "Tentang Sejarah".

[96] The Festival Film Mini mentioned by Prakoso was a very limited event, conducted in Taman Ismail Marzuki (Ismail Marzuki Jakarta Art Centre or TIM) with support from The Jakarta Art Council, and stopped in 1981. The festival rarely made it into media reports and there is almost no archive on it, so we must rely on Prakoso's books. See Prakoso, *Film Pinggiran*, 3.

[97] Uni Lubis, "*Pembuat Film 'Student Movement Indonesia': Reformasi Telah Gagal*" (Documentary Filmmaker: Reform Has Failed), in *Rappler*, 19 May 2016, accessed on 24 September 2017, https://www.rappler.com/indonesia/133609-film-student-movement-indonesia-reformasi-telah-gagal. (My translation).

only a handful of Indonesian documentary films screened in the cinema, and as of 2014, only seven have had regular releases[98].

House of Docs in JIFFest provided a platform for Indonesian documentaries to have their world premieres, the first public screening ever for a film. At least two Indonesian documentaries were premiered in this section: *Viva Indonesia*, an omnibus, made by four different directors (Nana Mulyana, Lianto Luseno, Ravi Bharwani and Asep Kusdinar, 2000), about political commentary around the election of 1999, and *The Conductors* (directed by Andibachtiar Yusuf, 2007), a documentary about three different music conductors in three different community settings[99]. *The Conductors* then screened in one of the major cinema chains in Indonesia, Blitz Megaplex group, in their regular screenings[100]. The number of the ticket sales is not available in media reports, but *The Conductors* has successfully received the accolade of being the best long-format documentary in the state-sanctioned Indonesian Film Festival Indonesia (Indonesian Film Festival or FFI) in 2008[101].

JIFFest went inactive in 2011 because lack of funding (and revived again in 2013-2015 on a smaller scale in an open-air cinema setting, which will be discussed later in Chapter 6), and until then it had never chosen any Indonesian documentaries as

---

[98] Eric Sasono, "*Politik Hal Ihwal dan Film Dokumenter*" (Politics of Things and Documentary Film), *Indoprogress*, 23 September 2014, accessed on 24 September 2017, https://indoprogress.com/2014/09/politik-hal-ihwal-dan-film-dokumenter/. (My translation)

[99] Anonymous. "Statistics on the 1st to 9th JIFFest", an annex to 9th Jakarta International Film Festival 2007, Official Report, December 7-16, 2007." (Jakarta: JIFFest, 2008).

[100] Anonymous, "*Film Indonesia: The Conductors*" in *indonesianindonesia.com*, accessed 1 December 2017, http://indonesiaindonesia.com/f/32493-film-indonesia-conductors/. (My translation).

[101] Himawan Pratista, "*Musik Sebagai Pemersatu Bangsa*" (Music for the Nation's Unity), in *Montase Film*, accessed 1 December 2017 http://montasefilm.com/the-conductors/. (My translation).

opening or closing film. JIFFest chose an Indonesian fiction film, an omnibus film entitled *Chant of Lotus*, as the closing film in 2007[102], and the American documentary film, *Waiting for Superman*[103] (directed by Davis Guggenheim), as the opening film in 2010[104], but Indonesian documentary has never reached the latter prestigious position. However, over the years since the good reception of documentaries at JIFFest, the demand for Indonesian artistic documentaries has been imagined by JIFFest programmers to become something concrete and Indonesian filmgoers have started to recognise documentary films with artistic quality.

The need for Indonesian artistic documentary films to be screened at the House of Docs created a demand that could not be fulfilled by the existing documentary films. In-Docs, in this case Dian Herdiany, and Shanty Harmayn as the supervisor of the programming, were not satisfied by the quality of the documentaries[105]. Harmayn saw this as an opportunity to provide professional training and workshops for documentary filmmakers outside film schools or the broadcast system[106]. Along with

---

[102] Silvia Wong. "Jakarta to Close with Premiere of Indonesian Film Chant of Lotus. Screendaily, 22 November 2007, accessed on 22 November 2017 https://www.screendaily.com/jakarta-to-close-with-premiere-of-indonesian-film-chants-of-lotus/4035992.article.

[103] Lalu Roisamri and Nauval Yazid. "Foreword" in *JIFFest, 12th Jakarta International Film Festival Catalogue,* (Jakarta: JIFFest, 2010), 6.

[104] Detikhot, "*JIFFest 2010 Dibuka Waiting for Superman*" (JIFFest 2010 Opened by Waiting for Superman), *Detik.com*, accessed 15 December 2018, https://hot.detik.com/movie/1502308/jiffest-2010-dibuka-waiting-for-superman (My translation).

[105] Harmayn, interview, 2017.

[106] The only film school at that time in Indonesia was the audio-visual department of The Jakarta Art Institute (or Institute Kesenian Jakarta, IKJ). They provided a curriculum for documentary filmmaking and many of their graduates worked on government commissioned project during the New Order era, as explained above. See also M. Abduh Aziz, "*Evaluasi Yayasan Masyarakat Mandiri Film Indonesia* (YMMFI)" (Evaluation of YMMFI), January 2011, 1. (My translation).

JIFFest script development programme workshop, In-Docs training regime has been significant in providing models for film and documentary film workshops later in Indonesia. This will be discussed in the next section.

Another exhibition platform that was also important for the development of documentary film culture in Indonesia was Screendocs. Screendocs is a programme to screen documentaries followed by a discussion with the documentary filmmaker(s) or experts on the subject matters, and moderated by an In-Docs officer. This programme was conducted by In-Docs after it was established in 2002 and done outside JIFFest. It was designed to broaden the documentary film audience base by screening documentary films in a less celebratory but regular fashion. Screendocs was considered to be part of the 'education section' under the In-Docs programme, which had a dual function[107]. On one hand, the education is regarded as part of training for the general public on media literacy about artistic documentary film. On the other, the education also meant the circulation of certain issues to the general audience as part of public discussion at large[108]. In other words, there has been a sense of a public information function for the documentaries screened at Screendocs.

Screendocs started in 2002 with 60 audience members, but then it was developed into a travelling format (Screendocs Traveling) in 2003[109]. Screendocs Traveling was conducted in collaboration with film communities in different cities in Indonesia, and "designed to build community for filmmakers living outside Jakarta with an eye

---

[107] YMMFI, "Narrative Report to Ford Foundation. Grant No.1025-0225." (Jakarta: YMMFI), 19-34. Other activities related to education are, visual literacy for high school students, documentary laboratories for filmmakers, and training for In-Docs staff.

[108] Amelia Hapsari, interview, 6 December 2016.

[109] YMMFI, "In-Docs YMMFI 2003," 4.

toward elevating the quality and quantity of Indonesian documentary films"[110]. Screendocs screened local and international documentary films, with the respective local filmmakers attending the screening and presenting their films[111] to "help local filmmakers to have greater perspective regarding such issues as subject matter, point of view as well as technical issues"[112]. Hence Screendocs was considered as a double educational tool for filmmakers: to compare their works with international documentaries and at the same time to engage to their audiences.

Screendocs Traveling in 2003 took place in Bandung, Semarang, Yogyakarta, Makassar, Surabaya, Denpasar and Medan, with audience numbers varying from 30 (Medan) to 150 (Semarang)[113]. Screendocs became an important educational programme for In-Docs, as it later developed into a bigger format such as training for literacy documentary in the form of Digdocs in 2013[114] and a mini documentary festival in Screendocs 2016 edition, named Screendocs Expanded[115]. In these two programmes, government agencies began to show interest by providing financial support to both programmes. Digdocs was supported by the Ministry of Education,

---

[110] YMMFI, "Narrative Report to Ford Foundation. Grant No.1025-0225," 23.

[111] *Ibid.*

[112] *Ibid, 24.*

[113] *Ibid,* 25.

[114] Anonymous, "*Komunitas Ngejah Menimba Ilmu di In*-Docs," (Ngejah Community Learn New Knowledge in In-Docs), in *Komunitas Ngejah*, accessed on 23 November 2017, https://komunitasngejah.wordpress.com/2013/12/09/komunitas-ngejah-menimba-ilmu-di-in-docs/. (My translation)

[115] In-Docs director, Amelia Hapsari said that In-Docs maintained the name Screendocs Expanded rather than changing the name using 'festival' because almost at the same day, Festival Film Dokumenter (FFD) Yogyakarta had their opening day. Hapsari said she does not want Screendocs Expanded to collide with FFD, especially for audience and the media to become confused if they hear there are two big documentary film festivals at almost the same time. This would create a bad impression about the lack of coordination between them. Hapsari, interview, 2016.

whilst Screendocs Expanded was supported by the newly-established Badan Ekonomi Kreatif (Indonesian Economic Creative Agency or BEKRAF), a non-ministerial body whose objective is to boost the Indonesian economy through creative industries[116]. However, those supports are not permanent. The support of Ministry of Education for Digdocs was a one-time event based on a call for proposals from the ministry, and there has been no follow up. While, for BEKRAF, there is no long-term commitment from this agency. However, BEKRAF has funded some other In-Docs activities such as an Impact Workshop in 2016 and Good Pitch[2] (Good Pitch Squared) in Jakarta in 2017[117].

From this explanation, there are two important points regarding documentary film culture and how publicness comes about related to Screendocs. First, it has become the site for film communities outside Jakarta to be introduced to documentary film as a distinct type of film exhibition. Travelling to major and middle-sized cities outside Jakarta, Screendocs became the site where the audiences share concerns about documentary filmmaking and the state of Indonesian film industry in their cities[118]. In many cities, the discussions were dominated by explanations about documentary films, documentary filmmaking and the audience's expectations of alternative screenings[119]. Screendocs, especially Screendocs Traveling, has managed

---

[116] As stated on their website, BEKRAF was responsible for the development of the creative economy in Indonesia. BEKRAF is responsible to assist the President in formulating, deciding, coordinating and synchronising policies for the creative economy sector. See: "*BEKRAF, Badan ekonomi kreatif, tonggak baru Ekonomi Kreatif Indonesia*," (BEKRAF, Economic creative agency, the new milestone for a new Indonesian creative economy), BEKRAF, Badan Ekonomi Kreatif Indonesia, accessed on 24 November 2017 http://www.bekraf.go.id/profil. (My translation).

[117] Hapsari, interview, 2016.

[118] YMMFI, "Screendocs Traveling 2007," (Jakarta: Unpublished), 4-6.

[119] *Ibid*, 5-8.

to create a public for documentary film, making it part of alternative screenings and film events in cities outside Jakarta.

Second, Screendocs in Jakarta was organised by involving NGO officers as speakers that capable to speak about the issues raised by the documentary[120]. The NGOs involved included, among others: Serikat Buruh Migran Indonesia (Indonesian Migrant Workers Union), Institute of Global Justice (a research and advocacy organisation on globalisation), Jaringan Tambang (Mining Network, a grassroots social movement to stop harmful impacts of mining industry) and WALHI (The Friends of the Earth Indonesia). These NGO staff discussed topics according to their expertise, such as legal protection for Indonesian migrant workers, problems of the mining industry, and flood management, among others. According to Herdiany, who was responsible for Screendocs, these NGOs brought their own audiences to attend the screenings and then directed the discussion on the issues rather than merely about documentary film or documentary filmmaking[121]. However, these audiences then mixed with the regular Screendocs audiences who came for the film[122]. Screendocs, for Herdiany, has been an attempt to create link between film communities and NGOs, and documentary film has become the juncture that enables these two distinct communities to meet and share concerns on the same platform[123]. These two communities had been having their own traditions with regard to documentary film, where the NGOs produced and screened documentary films as part of their campaign

[120] YMMFI, "Screendocs Jakarta 2007", (Jakarta: Unpublished), 2-5. Also Herdiany, interview, 2017.

[121] Herdiany, interview, 2017.

[122] *Ibid.*

[123] *Ibid.*

on particular issues, while the main concern of film communities, and also Herdiany's, has been building audiences for documentary film, as well as discussing the aesthetics of documentary films.

In this regular screening programme, the role of the documentary has moved to go beyond the state's propaganda, and to become part of public education and information on civic and political issues. The involvement of NGOs in this regard was also meant to produce audiences' engagement to documentary film as part of civic culture, and to become a fabric of the civil society movement in Indonesia. In-docs have continued what has been started by Garin Nugroho's SET Foundation not only to create the link between film community with civil society organisations but also to establish In-Docs' position as part of civil society movement in Indonesia, which has been significant during the transition from the authoritarian regime of New Order. In this regard, the activisms that have been carried out by In-Docs – through distribution and exhibition of documentary films – have made them being part of the media activists in the context of possible political transition that happened after *Reformasi*.

The artistic element of documentary film is also important concerning the publicness of the medium, mainly linked to the idea of circulation of the films and its subject matter. Documentary film is believed to possess its own artistic merit, therefore worthy being a form of leisure time activity for the general audience. This aesthetical approach is an integral part of the appeal to form public discourse based on the documentary's subject matter. This is part of the In-Docs' effort in envisioning documentary as media for the masses; therefore, the discourse would be elevated into public agenda capable of contributing to the formation of public opinion. Here, the documentary film audience is imagined to be a social category that needs to be

prepared to be more responsive to the issues that being foregrounded and in turn to be ready to get involved in public discourse, public debate and at some point to participate in public deliberation. The audience as a social category is in somehow is being prepared to be the 'witnessing public' rather than the audience of New Order documentary film, who were expected to follow state's instructions to support national development and other state's policy. The popularisation of documentary films somehow plays a vital role in the formation of the publicness because without which, documentary film will only be circulated among limited circles and the capability of the medium to be part of public debate and deliberation is always be limited. This effort to popularise documentary film has always been the main characteristic of documentary film organisations in this study and playing the key part in the formation of publicness.

JIFFest and In-Docs have provided exhibition platforms for documentary film in Indonesia, especially for artistic documentary. This has made documentary become part of public culture in Indonesia. International documentaries have also begun to be screened in major cinema chains in Indonesia, such as *An Inconvenient Truth* (directed by Davis Guggenheim, 2006) by 21 Cinema Group[124]. Then the issue for In-Docs was to provide support for Indonesian documentary filmmakers to produce artistic documentaries and In-Docs came up with an idea to conduct a series of workshops to nurture talents in documentary filmmaking.

[124] "*An Inconvenient Truth*," 21 Cineplex, accessed 11 December 2018, http://www.21cineplex.com/an-inconvenient-truth,1574.htm. (My translation). The documentary was screened at JIFFest before screened at 21 cinema group in their regular show.

In-Docs Workshops

In-Docs workshops have been very influential in documentary film culture in Indonesia because of a few reasons. First, they are designed to be comprehensive workshops that enable filmmakers not only to work with minimum numbers of crew, but also to undertake a complete set of training from filmmaking techniques to project pitching. They are also designed for participants with minimum experience in filmmaking to find and nurture new talents in documentary filmmaking[125], and this has attracted aspiring filmmakers from various backgrounds, such as students, NGO workers and social science researchers to join[126]. Second, over the years, the workshops have been well-distributed in many cities in Indonesia including to film communities outside the main island of Java, influencing filmmakers in many parts of the country. Third, for festival programmers and critics, the documentaries that come out of the workshops are considered to have distinct features, so much so that they have generated a similar style that they call "workshop film" (*film workshop*) -- mostly uttered in a derogatory manner for its formulaic and predictable style[127].

This section traces how the workshops came about as part of In-Docs' concerns about the lack of artistic documentary films in the general public space that developed with the narrative of democracy and openness in post-authoritarian Indonesia in general. This section then continues with an examination of the type of publicness that has been formed out of the entire process.

---

[125] "*Lokakarya Dokumenter*" (Documentary Workshop), In-Docs, accessed on 12 December 2018, https://www.in.in-docs.org/lokakarya-dokumenter. (My translation).

[126] Abduh Aziz. "*Evaluasi Yayasan Masyarakat Film Indonesia (YMMFI)*," (Evaluation of YMMFI), (Unpublished), 11. Also in YMMFI, "Report from YMMFI Programs 2006-2007." 2.

[127] See Irawanto, "Beyond Big Dramatic Moments", 111. Also Aziz, "*Tentang Sejarah*".

Training and workshops have been an integral part of In-Docs, and the idea for them came even before the organisation was established. Harmayn said the idea to establish In-Docs happened when she conducted a workshop for her own project with an American filmmaker and artist, Rhoda Gauer, in 1999. For this production, Harmayn and Gauer invited a documentary filmmaker, Les Blanc, for the workshop, funded by the Ford Foundation and conducted in the Foundation's office. Harmayn considered the workshop was very successful, and this attracted the Ford Foundation to work more with In-Docs in conducting the workshops in a more systematic way[128].

As mentioned above, the workshops come from the general concern about the artistic quality of documentary film in Indonesia and the lack of human resources. From this situation In-Docs suggested its role to unearth and nurture new talents to produce documentary films with what they consider as proper artistic quality, and this became the underpinning idea why In-Docs was established in the first place[129]. In the broader narrative, this effort to find and develop new talents is juxtaposed with two images: the first is the *Reformasi*, where the openness has enabled sensitive topics to enter the public sphere, and the second is the indication of popularity of documentary films among the public as they has gained the most ticket sales at JIFFest[130]. In the context of low output of documentary films and lack of quality in the existing documentary film, the workshops were justified[131].

---

[128] Harmayn, interview, 2017.

[129] "*Lokakarya Dokumenter*"

[130] Aziz, "*Evaluasi Yayasan*," 11.

[131] *Ibid.*

To reach the training objectives on filmmaking skills, In-Docs has been employing a curriculum that was originally designed by Shanty Harmayn. The curriculum is based on the courses Harmayn attended at Stanford University, which focused on the need of an individual to master a variety of skills needed in documentary filmmaking, from developing the idea into a storyline, to working with the camera and editing equipment[132]. Harmayn passionately described the gist of the In-Docs curriculum:

> The curriculum is truly meant to empower the filmmaker. So, we had a small class, where we were told, 'you have to be able to do everything'. So, the trainee, one person, can be the director, producer, sound mixer, camera person, and so on. Technically we have to be able to master everything, so we would understand what other people do when we have to work in a team. So, the aim is, you are always ready. When there is an assignment for you to go to, [to make a documentary in] Nicaragua [for example], you can make it happen. That is the basic thinking. However, the most important training is about logic, angle and point of view. For two years, the gist of what I studied was: what do you want to say with this documentary? So, the question is not, 'we have to be objective, don't we?' I believe point of view is never objective, is it? For me, objectivity is about accuracy on the data and information you present in the documentary[133].

Harmayn feels this model is suitable for the Indonesian context considering the lack of infrastructure for documentary film production, including the lack of funding support from established institutions such as broadcasters and government agencies[134]. This curriculum was developed later collectively with the mentors who did the actual training, and various other training subjects were added during implementation[135], and later was developed into a book, and various mentors who

---

[132] Harmayn, interview, 2017.

[133] *Ibid*.

[134] *Ibid*.

[135] *Ibid.*

have worked with In-Docs contributed to the volume[136]. This book covers subjects such as the definition of documentary based on Bill Nichols' book, *Representing Reality* (1990), and some more technical skills such as researching, directing, interviewing techniques and editing.

The workshops are called Kickstart! and are typically held for six to eight weeks, where the participants are given time to brainstorm and develop their ideas before continuing with shooting and editing their own projects[137]. During the process In-Docs provides professional documentary filmmakers to be the mentors. The participants are selected from a process in which they must send a documentary project proposal to In-Docs. When the workshops are conducted outside Jakarta, In-Docs collaborates with local film community groups, as these groups are able to contribute names of people that are seriously interested[138]. In-Docs covers the expenses for the documentary production. Therefore they call the participants 'scholarship recipients'[139], as they receive money to produce their documentaries.

To illustrate how the Kickstart! Workshops are conducted, here are the details I have summarised from the In-Docs report to its donor, Ford Foundation[140]. The workshop is divided into several steps, starting with development of documentary ideas, where the participants present their ideas and then brainstorm them with other participants and the mentors. Second, the participants are asked to produce a

---

[136] Chandra Tanzil, Rhino Ariefiansyah, and Tonny Trimarsanto. *Pemula dalam Film Dokumenter, Gampang-gampang Susah (Beginner in Documentary Film: Unpredictable*) (Jakarta: In-Docs, 2010). (My translation).

[137] "*Lokakarya Dokumenter*"

[138] Varadila, interview, 2018.

[139] YMMFI, "Report from YMMFI Programs 2006-2007," 4.

[140] *Ibid*, 4-5.

film statement and basic storyline based on preliminary research they have done for the project. Third, the participants start to improve the storyline into a treatment that can guide them to do visual research. The visual language of documentary film is introduced by professional camerapersons. Within this phase, the participants are asked to start shooting footage and learning how to sequence footage. The fourth step is production planning and an introduction to editing. The fifth step is the field research conducted in approximately 10 days to sharpen the ideas before the actual shooting. In these steps, In-Docs programme manager acts as the producer of the documentaries. Then the last phase is the actual shooting where the participants are given time to shoot the actual footage and produce the script for editing purposes. The last phase is the editing where professional editors are involved to edit the final product.

In-Docs began to run Kickstart! in 2002 focusing on the basic skills of documentary filmmaking for aspiring and novice documentary filmmakers. Kickstart! started in Jakarta and was then held in many other major cities in Indonesia with funding support from Ford Foundation [141], including Yogyakarta, Bali, Makassar, Palu and Padang[142]. So far Kickstart! has managed to find and develop such new talents in documentary filmmaking as Yuli Andari, Anton Susilo, Fajar Nugroho, Shalahuddin Siregar, Andi Arfan Sabran, Jastis Arimba, and Yusuf Rajamuda, among others[143]. Some of these names such as Yuli Andari, Anton Susilo, Shalahuddin Siregar and Andi Arfan Sabran are still active in documentary filmmaking, while Fajar Nugroho and

---

[141] *Ibid,* 5.

[142] *Ibid*.

[143] M. Abduh Aziz. "*Evaluasi Yayasan Masyarakat Mandiri,"* 12.

Jastis Arimba are active as directors of fiction film. When I visited the In-Docs office in Jakarta in 2016, a participant of the 2006 workshop, Andi Arfan Sabran was there discussing his latest work, which is produced and fully supported by In-Docs. This illustrates the way In-Docs maintains relationships with some of the workshop participants over the years.

In 2004 In-Docs brought a concept similar to Kickstart! to a commercial news television station, Metro TV, in a programme called the Eagle Award Competition. Originally, the programme was pitched to another TV station, Surya Citra Televisi Indonesia (SCTV) who in 1999-2000 conducted an independent film and video festival for novice filmmakers, but then it finally landed with Metro TV[144]. Eagle Award and In-Docs collaborated to conduct this workshop with a similar method for two years in 2005 to 2006, before Metro TV decided to end the contract and do the workshop on their own[145]. The Eagle Award Competition adopted a similar mechanism to Kickstart!, with the big difference that the invitation to join the workshop and the pitching process are televised nationwide[146]. This has significant impact on where they received proposals from around the country and the participants are selected from various provinces, including Aceh, Yogyakarta, Makassar and West Timor among others. The financial support from the television enables the participants to come to Jakarta to pitch and defend their project in front of a panel of three people, which over the years has consisted of a combination of filmmakers, scholars, public figures

[144] Herdiany, interview, 2017

[145] *Ibid.*

[146] "Pitching Forum Eagle Documentary Competition 2017 (2)," 29 July 2017, Metrotvnews.com, video, 9:17, http://video.metrotvnews.com/headline-news/yNLel16b-pantauan-arus-lalu-lintas-pagi-ini.

and Metro TV editors or journalists. Eagle Award then developed into a non-profit organisation named Eagle Institute under the purview of Metro TV Group and operates as a body semi-independent from the company[147].

This model of workshop has also been implemented by filmmaker Nia Dinata in 2008 and 2009 with Project Change, which was conducted under a non-profit organisation that she established, Kalyana Shira Foundation[148], also funded by Ford Foundation[149]. The documentaries produced under this workshop are related to women and gender issues, which have been the subject matters of Dinata's fiction films over the years[150]. One of the most important documentaries that came out of this Project Change is *At Stake*, an omnibus of four short documentaries made by four teams of filmmakers about the struggle of four different women in the patriarchal world. *At Stake* was awarded best documentary in Festival Film Dokumenter (FFD) Yogyakarta 2010 and selected for the Panorama Section of Berlinale 2009[151].

This type of workshop comes with funding for making the documentary, and this has been seen as a big opportunity for filmmakers to make their films[152]. This model

---

[147] "About Us," Eagle Institute Indonesia, accessed 15 December 2018, http://eagleinstitute.id/about. (My translation).

[148] "Workshop Film," Kalyana Shira Foundation, accessed 15 December 2018, http://www.kalyanashirafound.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=48&Itemid=116&lang=en. (My translation).

[149] Intan Paramaditha, "Cinema, Sexuality and Censorship in Post-Soeharto Indonesia," in *Southeast Asian Independent Cinema* (ed.) Tilman Baumgartel (Singapore: NUS Press Singapore, 2012), 87.

[150] Claire Tatzyo, "Nia Dinata and Indonesia's post-New Order Film Culture," Flinders Asia Centre Occasional Paper 3, May 2011.

[151] "At Stake," Berlinale, accessed 14 December 2018, https://www.berlinale.de/en/archiv/jahresarchive/2009/02_programm_2009/02_Filmdatenblatt_2009_20097217.html#tab=filmStills

[152] Novi Kurnia, "Writing, documentary films," 226.

has become one of the most common types of funding for documentary filmmakers in Indonesia for making the documentaries outside the commissioning of projects by NGOs[153].

However, the documentaries that come out of these workshops have been criticised. For example, a festival programmer complained about this "workshop film" and this person characterised the documentaries as shallow in subject matter, having a tendency to portray the character as inspirational, and as lacking in imagination in their visual presentation[154]. Abduh Aziz, who were involved in designing the curriculum for In-Docs and the Eagle Award, also complains about this 'workshop film', especially documentaries from the Eagle Award competitions. Aziz laments the lack of depth and inability of overcoming the social distance that occurs between the filmmakers and the subjects, resulting in the superficiality of the documentaries[155]. A film scholar, Budi Irawanto, also complaint about documentaries that come out of Eagle Award in terms of "excessive use of voice-overs and subjects as 'distant others'[156]".

Most of the documentaries coming from this type of workshop are short format and this might explain the lack of depth in the subject matters. One of the most famous short documentaries that comes from this type of workshop is *Suster Apung* (*Floating Nurse*, directed by Andi Arfan Sabran, 2006). The documentary tells a story about a nurse that has to travel every day to small islands off the coast of South

---

[153] *Ibid*, 216.

[154] My resource asked to remain anonymous for this statement.

[155] Aziz, "*Tentang Sejarah*".

[156] Irawanto, "Beyond Big Dramatic Moments," 118.

Sulawesi to visit her patients. She has been doing this without government support nor public utilities available at her disposal. The documentary was told from the nurse's point of view, and she also narrates her story throughout, over pictures of her examining and administering medicines to her patients. The nurse's difficulties in commuting to the islands using small fishermen's boats is emphasised and juxtaposed with the lack of government support for her to perform her job. This documentary came out of the 2006 Eagle Award competition under the theme *Selamatkan Indonesia* (Save Indonesia).

This documentary was so popular it managed to turn its subject, Rabiah, into a national symbol for an inspirational figure who dedicates herself to society regardless of the lack of public facilities or government support[157]. Rabiah became so popular she was featured as a model in a television advertising campaign for a presidential candidate in 2008[158]. This ad became a controversy when Rabiah protested, claiming that she has never been asked for her approval to use the advertisement in a presidential campaign and she thought it would only be a public service advertorial

---

[157] Wimala Nisitasari, "*Andi Rabiah: Suster Apung yang Rela Mengarungi Lautan Demi Membantu Sesama*," (Andi Rabiah: Floating Nurse Who is Willing to Cross Oceans to Help Others), in *IDN Times*, 18 April 2018, accessed 19 December 2018, https://www.idntimes.com/life/inspiration/wimala-nisitasari/andi-rabiah-suster-apung-yang-rela-mengarungi-lautan-demi-membantu-sesama-c1c2. (My translation)

[158] Aryo Wisanggeni, "*Suster Apung Protes Iklan Soetrisno Bachir*" (Floating Nurse Protests Soetrisno Bachir's Ad), in Kompas.com, 15 August 2008, accessed 19 October 2018, https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2008/08/15/11383932/quotsuster.apungquot.protes.iklan.soetrisno.bachir. (My translation).

(PSA)[159]. The controversy got bigger and then the ad was retracted by the presidential candidate's campaign team[160].

The story with *Suster Apung* and its role in society at large exemplifies the way the subject matter and the aesthetic of 'workshop film' documentaries circulates amongst the general public. The portrayal of an 'inspirational person' has been accepted well and pictured as a way to 'save Indonesia'. Even as late as 2016 or ten years after the film was premiered, Rabiah was invited by the president to attend a state ceremony in the Presidential Palace and featured in a media report as an inspirational figure[161]. This popularity shows the impact of the workshop and the documentaries that come out of it amongst the general public. The In-Docs workshops, which are also implemented by the Eagle Award Competition, have started a new tradition in documentary filmmaking. Because it has been adopted and televised nationally by Metro TV, the workshop has been pervasive, causing Irawanto to worry about its restraining effect on the development of artistic documentary filmmaking. In Irawanto's words:

> Eagle Award has been responsible for shaping the way many novice documentary filmmakers perceive what the best documentary is. The narrow understanding of documentary among novice filmmakers perhaps has discouraged them to make a documentary film continuously as they thought that documentary should be about the underprivileged people from the

[159] Liputan 6, "*Sutrisno Bachir Diprotes Suster Apung*" (Sutrisno Bachir was Protested by Floating Nurse), in Liputan6, accessed 19 October 2018, https://www.liputan6.com/news/read/163833/sutrisno-bachir-diprotes-suster-apung. (My translation)

[160] Detiknews,"*25 Frames Hentikan Penayangan Iklan SB-Suster Apung*" (25 Frames Retract SB-Suster Apung Ad), in Detiknews, 16 August 2008, accessed 19 October 2018, https://news.detik.com/berita/989552/25-frames-hentikan-penayangan-iklan-sb-suster-apung/2. (My translation).

[161] Wimala Nisitasari, "*Andi Rabiah".*

> remote areas in Indonesia with their extraordinary life rather than their familiar environment (the community)[162].

Commenting on this kind of criticism, Harmayn said that she could not please everyone with the workshop[163]. When she designed the workshop, she imagined it would benefit filmmakers, especially by enabling them to work professionally "to earn their living from making documentary films"[164]. In the context of the lack of infrastructure and support from government agencies, this aspiration was understandable and Harmayn linked this with her own position as a graduate from Stanford University majoring in documentary filmmaking. Regardless of other film businesses that she started and ran[165], at that time Harmayn was aware that the prospect of documentary filmmaking in Indonesia was not really bright, considering the differences in 'infrastructure and ecosystem'[166]. Therefore, she started In-Docs to provide services to improve the existing conditions of documentary filmmaking in Indonesia starting with this workshop.

In conclusion, these documentary film workshops conducted by In-Docs and other organisations such as Kalyana Shira, have been more than training sessions, but part of the film workshop, which could be seen as opening one of the possibilities for transition into democracy as argued by Lebayen and Suoto in their assessment of film

---

[162] Irawanto, "Beyond Big Dramatic Moments," 118.

[163] Harmayn, interview, 2017.

[164] *Ibid.*

[165] Harmayn also established and runs the film production company, Salto and the film import/distribution company Tanimbar Pictures. Later in her career, she co-established another film company, BASE Entertainment, to work with CJ Entertainment of Korea to produce some feature films, and co-established Kawi Content, a Singapore-based company to retain copyrights and develop multi-media platform content based on comics and graphic novels. See "Shanty Harmayn Hofman," Ties That Bind, accessed on 16 December 2018, http://www.tiesthatbind.eu/portfolio/shanty-harmayn-hofman/

[166] Harmayn, interview, 2017.

workshop in Franco's Spain[167]. In this view, the film workshop is considered to be a democratisation process when it is considered to be part of a more significant movement to put opposition to mainstream film culture under the dictatorial regime. Second, film workshop is also part of counter-ideological to the official cinema[168]. The film workshops in this thesis are different in the institutional arrangement as the term is meant for the expansion of film training (rather than a collective organisation in Lebayen and Suoto's article) but similar in many other ways. The workshop is part of a more significant social-political movement in providing an avenue for opposing the authoritarian regime and then into establishment of the new political culture that comes with *Reformasi*. More importantly, the workshop practices could be seen as a departure from the dominant cinema culture during the New Order. Filmmaking in In-Docs workshops and the likes are not seen to be part of the state's venture or made with state's permission. In comparison to Peransi's appeal on documentary filmmaking, these In-Docs workshops do not even try to conform to the state's ideology nor thematic approval. Then comes the second characteristic of these In-Docs workshops, which is the counter-ideological to the official cinema as the filmmakers try to provide themes outside the New Order ideological position in promoting development through documentaries.

It is important to note the role of international non-profit and philanthropic organisations such as Ford Foundation in contributing to the opening up the democratic sphere in media as well as through media. Collaborating with local NGOs,

---

[167] Miguel Fernández Labayen & Xose Prieto Souto (2012) Film workshops in Spain: Oppositional practices, alternative film cultures and the transition to democracy, *Studies in European Cinema*, No. 8, 3, 227-242.

[168] *Ibid*. 228.

these organisations conduct series of media training events under the narrative of supporting democratic change in Indonesia after the fall of the authoritarian regime. Edwin Jurriens also observes a similar trend in radio broadcasting, where various donor organisations and international agencies work with NGOs such as KBR 68H and Internews to develop media training institutions to educate radio journalists as part of institutionalising democratisation in post-authoritarian Indonesia[169]. The target is to develop the media environment where the practitioners such as filmmakers and broadcasters would make a career after training, as the environment was still relatively weak in post-authoritarian setting because of the regime's pressure. Therefore, the training and workshops for the new media practitioners are expected to give them new skills necessary to operate within the new political environment and to improve civic engagement in the public sphere[170].

This is where publicness could be interpreted as the ground for series of attempts to create a sphere in which the media can operate with better quality and in a free manner[171] in order to reach their audiences and maintain openness and dialogue in the public sphere at the same time. Van Heeren calls this alternative "media practices" conducted by film communities as a challenge to the dominant media practices of the New Order that were still dominating the film culture at that time. I

---

[169] Edwin Jurriens, *From Monologue*, 71. UNESCO Jakarta has also done a relatively similar programme in 1999-2004, and I was one of the co-trainers in the training programmes for local radio stations to develop their journalism skills to welcome the first democratic election in Indonesia in 1999. I also joined Internews later on in 2004 to lead a relatively similar programme.

[170] Edwin Jurriens "'Radio Active', The creation of media-literate audiences in Post-Soeharto Indonesia," in *Politics and Media in Twenty First Century Indonesia: Decade of Democracy*, (eds.) Krishna Sen and David Hill (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 45-46.

[171] In many cases, these training events involved understanding of free media practices, codes of conduct and other types of capacity building for media practitioners in relation to their media skills. See Jurriens, *ibid*.

see these practices as directly related to publicness, in the sense of the newly-found openness, in a country where the public sphere has just opened while the institutions that should make it work were considered not ready. This becomes the ground for NGOs such as In-Docs, SET and Kalyana Shira to work with international philanthropic organisations such as Ford Foundation under the narrative of democratisation and civic engagement through stories that are not told by mainstream media. Regardless of what has resulted in these "workshop films", the workshops have been successful in making public a rather marginalised media form in Indonesia and this model might be relevant for understanding In-Docs in the post-authoritarian setting where not all the democratic institution considered to be stable.

However, later in its development In-Docs' focus has changed to adjust with recent developments in documentary film culture in the global setting. The next section elaborates In-Docs' recent developments both in its workshops and as an institution. These two features are seen as In-Docs' responses to its new environment and as possibilities that have made In-Docs take new directions.

New documentary film culture

In-Docs institutional format remains the same as an NGO working to develop documentary film culture in Indonesia under the narrative of democratisation. But this had to be adjusted because, more than a decade since *Reformasi*, the narrative hardly had any remaining value[172]. Therefore In-Docs needed to develop a new narrative and strategy to make itself remain relevant, and this section discusses this

[172] Hapsari, interview, 2016.

development, especially the assertion of a transnational network involving In-Docs and opening the possibilities of transnational publicness. Adjustments also were necessary with the workshops. In-Docs is still doing The Kickstart! workshops to continue finding and developing new talents, but a new set of workshops, the Impact Workshop, has been held to welcome this new culture of documentary film. I see this process of adjustment as a friction where the environment provide obstacles to the development of In-Docs but at the same time also make it possible for In-Docs to take the shape it is in now.

In-Docs' existence cannot be separated from the Ford Foundation's intervention in the development of civil society groups in Indonesia, especially to respond to the sudden political openness that took place after Suharto stepped down in 1998. The level of Ford Foundation's significance for In-Docs described by Harmayn:

> I always mention, In-Docs is not founded by me and Natascha (Devillers). No. It was the child of YMMFI and Ford Foundation. Because without Ford, In-Docs would never be alive. So, it was Philip Yampolsky's idea at that time[173].

The key personnel in Ford Foundation who supported the establishment of In-Docs was Philip Yampolski, an anthropologist specialised in ethnomusicology. Yampolski has managed to collect recordings of Indonesian ethnic and traditional music and folklore in a project commissioned by the Smithsonian Institute[174]. After having an intensive discussion with Harmayn regarding the need to establish an organisation for supporting documentary film, Yampolski agreed to provide a grant

[173] Harmayn, interview, 2017.

[174] Herdiany, interview, 2017. See also, Goenawan Mohammad, *Celebrating Indonesia: Fifty Years with The Ford Foundation 1953-2003*, (Singapore: The Ford Foundation and Equinox Publishing), 194-5.

for establishing In-Docs[175]. Ford Foundation has been operating in Indonesia since 1953, and their work has mostly related to providing support for development in Indonesia, including in social and cultural fields. In the early days of its operation, Ford Foundation worked with government agencies (and universities), and they extended the strategy by working more with private groups and non-profit sector[176].

Since the beginning, the original idea of In-Docs has been to assist Indonesian documentary filmmakers in production, distribution and exhibition of their work, hence Harmayn uses the term 'service organisation' to emphasise the role of In-Docs as a supporting institution in documentary filmmaking rather than mainly focusing on one aspect such as producing documentaries[177], as has been done by Kalyana Shira and SET. Harmayn describes that when she established In-Docs, there had been a few NGOs that already produced documentary films for their campaigns, but she felt those documentaries were not impactful enough. The problems, according to Harmayn, were due to these reasons:

> Many NGOs made documentaries themselves, but they lacked of quality. They do not know any filmmakers who could do it properly. Or, if they commissioned filmmakers, most of the time, they had communication breakdown, so the campaign and the work do not really work in sync[178].

The quote above implies that one of the 'markets' for documentary films is the NGO campaigns with themes such as the environment, human rights, and civic

---

[175] Harmayn, interview, 2017.

[176] Mohammad, *Celebrating Indonesia*, 24.

[177] Harmayn, interview, 2017.

[178] *Ibid.*

engagement, among others[179]. In-Docs decided not to produce documentaries for NGOs, and instead to work on in what Harmayn called the bigger picture[180].

This bigger picture was obtained from research on the state of documentary film in Indonesia done by In-Docs commissioned by the Ford Foundation to build a database for documentary filmmaking and filmmakers in Indonesia[181]. In-Docs programme manager 2002-2006, Dian Herdiany, recalled that the findings defined In-Docs' priorities and provide justification for its programme[182]. The main findings were: first, the filmmakers needed training and education as they did not have adequate skills in documentary filmmaking. Second, there was a need for networking among the filmmakers so they could exchange skills among themselves whenever they have a project. Therefore, a database of and communication among people with proper skills in filmmaking was crucial. Third, there was a need for funding access, but this was not their main concern at that time because what they needed most was expressing their social and political concerns and making them public[183]. These filmmakers had been making films and they would do it with the available resources as long as it got done. Based on this research, In-Docs built the idea of themselves as a 'service organisation' to provide training and education for documentary filmmakers as one of their top priorities, along with expansion of documentary film audience[184]. With this format In-Docs asserted their position by working together

---

[179] *Ibid.*

[180] *Ibid.*

[181] *Ibid.* Also Herdiany, interview, 2017.

[182] Herdiany, interview, 2017.

[183] *Ibid.*

[184] *Ibid.*

with the filmmakers in opening up the space for documentary film culture so they could produce and circulate documentary film. This strategy was seen as adequate, considering the lack of infrastructure for documentary film, and opening their own space – reasserting the alternative media practices in van Heeren's words[185] – could be seen as the priority as that time.

In-Docs activities could only happen with a grant from the Ford Foundation. The amount was varied and according to Shanty Harmayn, it has been one hundred to two hundred thousand US dollars per year[186]. The current In-Docs director, Amelia Hapsari, mentioned that In-Docs received around one billion rupiah (around US$74,000) in 2012 when she held her position[187]. This number varies from year to year and Hapsari said Ford cut the funding by forty percent in 2016[188]. However, in 2017 Ford Foundation still granted funding to In-Docs with a scheme to build (or purchase) a building[189] under the premise of "general support to enable documentary films to achieve greater impact in society and for core support for institutional strengthening" with a total amount of $930,861[190]. Hapsari said this funding would help In-Docs to obtain a property so that it does not have to pay annual rent for office

---

[185] van Heeren, *Contemporary Indonesian Cinema*, 12.

[186] Harmayn, interview, 2017.

[187] Hapsari, interview, 2016.

[188] *Ibid*.

[189] The list of funding from Ford Foundation is available in Ford Foundation funding database, "Grant Database," Ford Foundation, accessed 25 November 2018, https://www.fordfoundation.org/work/our-grants/grants-database/grants-all?search=%26SearchText%3Dindonesia&page=0.

[190] *Ibid.*

space, which is quite costly. However, on the other hand, Hapsari said this grant will be the last from Ford and this has created a significant issue about sustainability[191].

In its attempt to find new funding sources, In-Docs has benefited from its network of the documentary film organisations in Southeast Asian countries, and it has begun to create programmes on a regional level. In 2016, In-Docs adapted their programmes in Indonesia to cater to the need for building a platform for Southeast Asian filmmakers and documentary organisations. Rather than being a 'service organisation' for Indonesian filmmakers only, In-Docs has broadened its scope and space of operation to develop relatively similar programmes but to cater to the need in the region. This move, according to Hapsari is done to proactively "assert the importance of documentary film", rather than just wait for anyone to be interested in documentary films[192], by expanding the space for the documentary film culture into the transnational public. This importance, according to Hapsari, could not be justified only by showing the role of documentary film on the national level, because that has been In-Docs' ground as 'service organisation' over the years and the situation has not been changed from the idea of infrastructure for documentary film[193]. Hapsari said this situation needed a breakthrough and by levelling up the arena to Southeast Asia, In-Docs would be able to be the centre for development of documentary film culture in the region[194].

---

[191] Hapsari, interview, 2016.

[192] *Ibid*.

[193] *Ibid.*

[194] *Ibid.*

The idea to build the regional network actually came from an intensive discussion between Indonesian film communities and the officers from the Goethe Institute in Jakarta in 2012. At that time Goethe, had just finished a workshop to assist three filmmakers to produce documentaries under a programme called *Indonesia-10 Years After Reformasi: Documentary Cinema Capacity Building Programme*[195]*.* When this programme ended, Goethe Institute felt the need to continue supporting documentary film development in another direction, mostly to answer questions regarding the sustainability of organisations, a problem that kept recurring for local NGOs[196]. Then Goethe Institute decided to fund a programme to formalise the network of Southeast Asian documentary film organisations from Southeast Asian countries.

Goethe funded a programme called DocNet Southeast Asia in 2012, and they appointed the Indonesian film activist Lulu Ratna as the coordinator[197]. This programme was based on an assumption about the massive opportunities for documentary filmmakers to record the social and political situation in the region with digital revolution and affordable technology[198]. The main target for this programme

---

[195] Shalahuddin Siregar, "Rupa-rupa Pendanaan Dokumenter" (Variety of Documentary Film Funding), in *Cinema Poetica*, 1 September 2015, accessed 16 November 2018, https://cinemapoetica.com/rupa-rupa-pendanaan-dokumenter/.(My translation). The documentaries produced by Goethe through this scheme have received major exposure in Indonesia. They are also screened in various international festivals, where they have gained several accolades, and the filmmakers hve received media attention. The documentaries include: *Denok and Gareng* (Director: Dwi S. Nugraheni), *The Land Beneath the Fog* (Director: Shalahuddin Siregar), and *Die Before Blossom* (Director: Ariani Darmawan).

[196] I gathered this information during my fieldwork at In-Docs when I joined the meeting of documentary film organisations from Southeast Asian countries. The source of this information is from my fieldwork note.

[197] Fieldwork note.

[198] "About DocNet Southeast Asia" DocNet Southeast Asia, accessed 23 November 2017, http://www.goethe.de/ins/id/lp/prj/dns/abo/deindex.htm.

was independent documentary filmmakers, producers, film schools, TV stations and other relevant stakeholders, and the aim was organising them in various events. Included in these events was a documentary film festival called Chopshot Short Documentary Film Festival that was held in Jakarta in 2014 to screen documentary films from Southeast Asia plus some other films from Asia[199]. This festival managed to create a forum for Southeast Asian documentary filmmakers and organisations for the first time[200]. To grasp the significance of this forum, it is important to understand that unlike their fiction film counterparts, most documentary filmmakers in Southeast Asia do not have money to travel and gather in international film festivals[201]. For Southeast Asian fiction filmmakers, it is common to gather and hang out during film festivals and networking has been relatively easy for them because they often meet in regional festivals such as JIFFest, Cinemanila in the Philippines, Bangkok International Film Festival[202] or even film festivals in Europe[203]. Therefore, DocNet has provided a platform for an organisation like In-Docs to communicate with similar organisations from other Southeast Asian countries. This DocNet Southeast Asia inspired In-Docs, especially Hapsari, to continue this regional network, especially because Goethe Institute in Jakarta stopped its funding to DocNet in 2015[204].

---

[199] "Chopshots 2014" in DocNet Southeast Asia, accessed 23 November 2017, http://www.goethe.de/ins/id/lp/prj/dns/csf/enindex.htm.

[200] Hapsari, interview, 2016.

[201] *Ibid.*

[202] *Ibid.* Also Van Heeren, *Contemporary Indonesian Films,* 15. Also my personal experience when attending international film festivals such as Cinemanila, Rotterdam Film Festival and Berlinale.

[203] Hapsari, interview, 2016.

[204] *Ibid.*

From this DocNet forum, In-Docs managed to know a South African-based organisation called Steps[205] and they collaborated to create a programme called Dare to Dream[206], which is basically a pitching forum for documentary filmmakers in Southeast Asia. Steps is a relatively similar organisation to In-Docs, but operating in South Africa, working as a 'service organisation' for documentary filmmakers in Africa, linking them with broadcasters in many countries in Africa[207]. Steps works in this Dare to Dream programme to target fresh documentary films from Asian countries to be distributed in African countries, because it has access to African broadcasters[208]. Steps is also considering countries in Asia as a potential distribution target, beginning with countries in Southeast Asia[209].

The collaboration with a South African-based organisation is an interesting development for documentary film culture in Indonesia, as usually collaboration has been with European or American-based organisations. Steps has been quite successful with their earlier programmes such as "Why Poverty?"[210] and "Why Democracy?"[211] and In-Docs feels this collaboration will enable them to create a bigger platform and totally new possibilities to assert the importance of documentary

---

[205] "Steps," Steps, accessed 16 November 2018, http://steps.co.za/

[206] "Dare to Dream," In-Docs, accessed 16 November 2018 https://www.in.in-docs.org/dare-to-dream. (My translation). See also this programme in Steps website "Dare to Dream Asia," Steps, accessed 16 November 2018, http://steps.co.za/projects/dare-to-dream-asia/, and "Dare to Dream Asia," Dare to Dream, accessed 16 November 2018, http://daretodreamasia.org/.

[207] Hapsari, interview, 2017.

[208] *Ibid*.

[209] "Dare to Dream" In-Docs.

[210] "Why Poverty?" Steps, accessed 16 November 2018, http://steps.co.za/why-poverty/.

[211] "Why Democracy?" Steps, accessed 16 November 2018, http://steps.co.za/why-democracy/.

film[212]. Hapsari said it is important for In-Docs to think about their position beyond national boundaries, and the collaboration with Steps is one of the examples of the way they should proceed. For Hapsari, this path is necessary because: first, it would create a bigger audience for documentary films co-produced by In-Docs, despite lack of direct financial benefit[213]. Second, and this is consistent with other In-Docs regional activities, it is important for In-Docs to be more ambitious by playing a bigger role as the hub that connects documentary film organisations and documentary filmmakers in Southeast Asia[214]. Only by transforming In-Docs into a regional organisation will In-Docs be able to keep their significance for the funding agencies[215]. For Hapsari, this strategy is relevant to the new environment, rather than repeating the old rhetoric of "promoting democracy in Indonesia through documentary film"[216]. She considers this rhetoric vulnerable because it is difficult to claim documentary film can single-handedly have a positive impact on democracy, as it is impossible to measure[217]. Moreover, people can easily argue about the quality of Indonesian democracy recently, especially with the rise of conservative Islamic groups in the country[218]. Therefore, asserting a bigger regional role is considered to fit In-Docs' role and this would be a new ground for In-Docs to seek funding[219]. Hapsari says that the regional

---

[212] Hapsari, interview, 2016.

[213] *Ibid*.

[214] *Ibid*.

[215] *Ibid*.

[216] *Ibid*.

[217] *Ibid.*

[218] *Ibid.*

[219] *Ibid.*

role as a hub to connect regional interests in documentary filmmaking would make it easier for In-Docs to apply for funding and to collaborate with other organisations[220].

Returning to the discussion about civic engagement and the public sphere in a post-authoritarian setting, which has been the narrative for In-Docs, this new path, on paper, seems to be a diversion from In-Docs' mission. However, looking carefully at In-Docs' programme, it seems this direction is consistent with In-Docs' programmes to open up the space for documentary filmmaking rather than focusing on promoting critical engagement through documentary films. In-Docs holds a view that once the sphere is open, the documentaries would automatically provide content that enable civic engagement and dialogues among citizens. This later development has shown an expansion of this view.

Regardless of the reduction of funding mentioned above, Ford Foundation is still backing In-Docs to develop into a more sustainable organisation to realize its regional ambition. In-Docs utilises the network and database that was left by DocNet Southeast Asia to distribute information about Dare to Dream[221]. From DocNet Southeast Asia, In-Docs also manages to get to know international mentors that are willing to work with them to bring these regional filmmakers on to the international level[222]. These international mentors are considered to be very important for In-Docs in two ways[223]. First, they have the capacity to develop stories that have a global appeal, as they mostly come from documentary-related backgrounds, such as in the

---

[220] *Ibid.*

[221] *Ibid.*

[222] *Ibid.*

[223] Varadila, interview, 2018.

broadcasting system, or international media acquisition. Therefore, they know what international buyers require from local stories and mentorship with them would help the filmmakers to shape their stories accordingly[224]. Second, besides the aesthetic aspect, these mentors also possess deep understanding of the industry and they are capable of introducing the filmmakers to people in the documentary film industry and the international documentary film festivals that benefit the filmmakers' projects[225].

In-Docs took over DocNet Southeast Asia and Hapsari decided to continue networking by conducting a forum for Southeast Asian documentary film organisations, as already started by DocNet Southeast Asia[226]. In 2016, In-Docs received in-kind funding from BEKRAF plus funding from Ford Foundation, to carry out a meeting for documentary film organisations in Southeast Asia. The meeting was conducted during my fieldwork trip to Indonesia, and more than attending and observing the meeting, I was asked by In-Docs to be the moderator of the meeting. I decided to accept the offer to get the first-hand data and to be involved in the dynamics of the organisation and the culture that it is trying to develop.

The meeting was held on 30 November 2016 at Hotel Morrissey, in Central Jakarta. The title of the meeting was 'Strategic Meeting for Documentary Film Organisations of Southeast Asia', and it was attended by eight organisations: Freedom Film Festival and MyDocs (Malaysia), Hanoi DocLab (Vietnam), Bophana Center (Cambodia), Dokyu Peeps (The Philippines), and Taiwan Documentary Film Festival as an observer, with In-Docs hosting the programme. Some individuals such

---

[224] *Ibid.*

[225] *Ibid*. See also Shalahuddin Siregar, "Rupa-rupa Pendanaan".

[226] Hapsari, interview, 2016.

as Lulu Ratna, who was the coordinator for DocNet Southeast Asia, came to the meeting to link it to the 2014 forum under DocNet. Before starting the meeting, I was introduced by In-Docs director, Amelia Hapsari, as the board member of In-Docs who would moderate the event and also would write about the meeting as part of my PhD thesis at King's College London. I also used the opportunity to reiterate my intention to take notes and analyse the meeting for the thesis.

From my fieldwork notes, I found that the meeting was a one-day meeting focusing on building a collaboration platform for those organisations, starting organically by laying out and discussing each other's programmes. As well as presenting each other's profiles and challenges, the forum went on to share programmes over one calendar year and seek possibilities for collaboration. The criteria for collaboration were discussed together in the panel, which I was moderating. The result was a map of regular and occasional activities shared among the group, available to be shared internally with individual organisations in their own country.

One important note from the meeting was a comment made by Lulu Ratna as she mentioned that this forum has shown significant progress from the previous forum under DocNet, because the forum in DocNet did not have clear agenda and it turned out to be a gathering dominated by individual organisations presenting challenges and seeking inputs from each other on how to overcome those challenges[227]. That method has failed because the forum ceased to be productive and turned into a forum where everybody lamented about their situation whilst being unable to really

[227] Fieldwork note.

help because of the totally different circumstances they have all been facing[228]. Regardless of Ratna's comment, the forum did managed to build the programme database and then it was planned to be held on an annual basis, with the possibility of having joint activities.

These activities would be seen as part of the process in which In-Docs is undergoing a transformation from an NGO that works to enlarge the media sphere within national boundaries into a regional organisation to assert the importance of documentary films and make the sphere become bigger for it. As a 'service organisation', In-Docs has to adjust their approach to make themselves relevant and this is done by expanding their activities into the regional level. So far, what has been done in these forums is the development of a transnational network for documentary film organisations and documentary filmmakers to collaborate in a bigger arena. However, the possibilities of developing this network into one with shared concerns are apparent and this could lead to a formation of the transnational public.

It is important to note the observation from Alexandra Corby on festival organisers in Indonesia that they "do not see themselves as working in explicitly 'post-authoritarian' space" and that they articulate that circumstance in their work in many other ways while the political expression in that space remains latent[229]. I saw that this has also happened with this transnational network, as the organisations that attended the meeting offered possibilities of working under relatively similar political constraints and historical trauma without them really being explicitly aware of the shared transnational space imbued with such political connotations that might enable

[228] Fieldwork note.

[229] Alexandra Corby, "It's Not Just About Films," 185.

the transnational public to be formed. For example, Freedom Film Festival of Malaysia – an annual activist film festival in Malaysia – who attended the meeting has offered a chance for other organisations to promote the festival to activists and filmmakers to screen their films with human rights and social justice themes and then to become part of a bigger social movement[230]. Another example is the potential from Bophana Centre of Cambodia who works on a project of "intergenerational dialogue between the Khmer Rouge survival and the youth"[231] to overcome a national trauma of dark historical past, which can be linked into the experience of Indonesia with the 1965-66 massacre. This potential is highly relevant as one of the projects presented in the Impact Workshop that would be conducted a day after the meeting was a documentary about old women survivors of the 1965 massacre who formed a choir just to express themselves in public. In-Docs is co-producing this documentary with the Japanese broadcaster, NHK. These themes have not been really explored and until now no actions have been taken to make any of these happen.

So far, this transnational network has been utilised by In-Docs to expand its own workshops and to promote its pitching forum programme, Good Pitch Squared Southeast Asia[232]. I will elaborate an activity I attended during my fieldwork trip, Impact Workshop, which was the preparation for and integral part of Good Pitch Squared and from this I will explain the development of documentary film culture which In-Docs has become a significant part of.

---

[230] Fieldwork note.

[231] Fieldwork note. See also "Transmissions 2018," Bophana Audio Visual Research Centre, accessed 13 December 2018, http://bophana.org/events/transmissions-2018/.

[232] "Good Pitch^2 Southeast Asia," In-Docs, accessed 3 November 2017, https://www.in.in-docs.org/goodpitch2sea.

Good Pitch is originally an idea initiated by a London-based non-government organisation called Doc Society[233]. It is basically a pitching forum for documentary filmmakers where they can meet potential collaborators, either financial supporters, distributors, NGOs, philanthropists, charities, and corporations or other types of collaborators for their projects. In-Docs claims that Good Pitch is different from conventional pitching forums and this project is basically an effort to find a breakthrough in getting documentary film produced[234]. In-Docs explains about Good Pitch Squared on their website:

> Good Pitch forges powerful partnerships between multi-disciplinary stakeholders – NGOs, philanthropists, social entrepreneurs, corporate / brand partners, broadcasters, educators, policy makers, and any changemakers who can utilize great documentary films to make their intended impact in the society[235].

The main selling point for Good Pitch Squared is the promise that the impact of documentary films will be directed to the public at large, and this workshop is a tool to build into it[236]. This Good Pitch Squared Southeast Asia is meant for documentary filmmakers from Southeast Asian countries to pitch their project in front of panels that consist of these 'multi-disciplinary stakeholders'.

The Impact Workshop I attended was basically a preparation for the filmmakers before they pitch their projects in the actual Good Pitch that was to be conducted in May 2017 in Jakarta. The workshop took place right after the Southeast Asia strategic meeting, 1 – 4 December 2016, in the same place, the Morrissey Hotel in Central

---

[233] "Hello and Welcome," Docsociety, accessed 3 November 2017, https://docsociety.org/

[234] Fieldwork note.

[235] "Good Pitch^2 Southeast Asia".

[236] Hapsari, interview, 2017.

Jakarta. I attended the workshop as an observer. The facilitator was Beadie Fenzie of Doc Society (it was called BritDocs then). There were seven projects from seven teams presented in the workshop, and as it was meant to be the rehearsal for a pitching forum, each team was asked to present the story. The story then was broken down into some key messages that might be turned into selling points that can be connected to the stakeholders that would attend the pitching forum. These filmmakers had to imagine the potential impacts[237] that they would create with the documentaries, and then present them to the potential collaborators. These potential collaborators are called 'changemakers'[238], as it is believed that the documentary filmmakers and these collaborators shared similar concerns to make change in the society to make it better. This pitching forum is a platform that can be utilised to reach that objective[239].

The Good Pitch Squared Southeast Asia was conducted on 4 May 2017 at Goethe Institute, Jakarta and considered to be a big result, making Jakarta one of the sites for the Good Pitch Squared network with other countries such as United Kingdom, the United States, South Africa, Taiwan, Argentina, Kenya and Australia[240]. This pitching forum is also called as 'beyond filmmaking', and one of the projects, *Songs for My Children* from Indonesian filmmaker, Shahaluddin Siregar, received a seventy five

---

[237] To see the impact, Doc Society has provided a guide to impact as can be seen here: Doc Society, "Who are we and what do we do?" in The Impact Field Guide and Tool Kit, Docsociety, accessed 27 November 2017, https://impactguide.org/britdoc/.

[238] "Good Pitch^2 Southeast Asia".

[239] Fieldwork note.

[240] Ni Nyoman Wira, "Jakarta to host the first Good Pitch^2 Southeast Asia event", in *The Jakarta Post*, 25 April 2017, accessed 24 November 2017, http://www.thejakartapost.com/life/2017/04/25/jakarta-to-host-first-good-pitch2-southeast-asia-event.html.

percent pledge of funding in that forum, while *Audio Perpetua*, a film project from Filipino filmmaker Universe Beldoza, received a commitment from a non-government organisation to provide training for its subjects, the visually impaired people[241].

To conclude this section, I would like to discuss the development of documentary film culture in Indonesia where the aesthetics is moving closer to the economic aspect of the filmmaking, and how this trend is affecting the notion of publicness and the public in general. To borrow Meg McLagan's assertion about the changing economy of documentary film, the overall situation in which the link between the aesthetics and the economics are being reinforced has resulted in the inclusion of social entrepreneurship into documentary film training[242]. Based on imagining the impact that would be generated from their documentaries, the filmmakers then offer the project to potential partners and then develop the narrative in dialogue with the inputs they receive. The concept of impact is basically used by social entrepreneurs to combine two different things[243]. First "it refers to demonstrable political effects that something can have in the real world"[244]. Second, "it refers to institutionalisation of audit practices through the introduction of a set of concrete performance criteria by which such change can be imagined and then asserted"[245]. These two ideas are

---

[241] Jessica Valentina, "Good Pitch2 Southeast Asia 2017 goes beyond filmmaking", in *The Jakarta Post*, 6 May 2017, accessed 25 November 2017, http://www.thejakartapost.com/life/2017/05/05/good-pitch2-southeast-asia-2017-goes-beyond-filmmaking.html.

[242] Meg McLagan, "Imagining Impact," 314.

[243] *Ibid*, 309.

[244] *Ibid.*

[245] *Ibid.*

meant to change the approach in a pitching process, making it more quantifiable and based on projected empirical measurements[246].

This social entrepreneurship approach in documentary has created debate in documentary filmmaking, as it is seen as affecting documentary aesthetics. Moreover, the tendency to measure impact at the very early stage of a documentary project would make documentary fall into an activism category rather than maintaining its artistic integrity[247]. However, this measurable impact is also questioned by documentary scholar Bill Nichols as he considers the empirical measurement promoted by these impact workshops as basically similar to the outcomes that have been produced political election campaigns and the 'creatives' in advertising agencies[248] rather than the target of artistic workers such as documentary filmmakers. For Nichols, this 'social impact movement' is confusing jargon belonging to established non-profit institutions that is used as a smokescreen when they are challenged by the call for social change[249]. Regardless of that comment, this Impact Workshop has demonstrated a 'paradigm shift' in documentary film culture in general, which is the 'infiltration of economic reasoning into the independent film sector'[250].

Reflecting back on In-Docs and documentary film culture in Indonesia, this economic reasoning from the Impact Workshop might intensify the need to talk to

---

[246] *Ibid,* 309-313.

[247] *Ibid,* 315.

[248] Bill Nichols, *Speaking Truths with Films: Evidence, Ethics, Politics in Documentary* (Oakland: University California Press, 2016), 228.

[249] *Ibid*, 224.

[250] McLagan, "Imagining Impact," 316.

the stakeholders and communicate more in the lexicons of these 'changemakers'. However, post-1998 Indonesian documentary filmmakers have been doing this all along because of the absence of government funding and public service broadcaster support for documentary filmmaking and documentary film culture. Documentary film workshops are still considered to be the best way of making documentary film because these workshops enable "filmmakers to concentrate in the creative side without getting headache to earn money, which is extraordinarily difficult. Film can still be produced with good technical quality and the crews would not go hungry". Workshop such as the Impact Workshop is an expansion of the limited 'space' in post-1998 Indonesia in which documentary filmmakers are able to produce and circulate their documentaries. The Impact Workshop might even open possibilities, including involving new players such as video streaming companies or philanthropic institutions to join documentary filmmaking, as in In-Docs has done recently[251].

Conclusion

How do publicness and dialogue about the public appear in relation to the development of In-Docs as an organisation in the context of the documentary film culture in Indonesia? To answer that question there are some important points I would like to raise.

First, by looking the documentary film organisation from the point of view of publicness, In-Docs has benefited from the openness that developed after 1998 by

[251] "Philanthropy Stage" FI Fest 2018, 17 November 2018, accessed 3 January 2019, https://fifest.filantropi.or.id/session/philanthropy-pitch-social-philantrhopy-through-documentary-film/

working as a civil society organisation to open the space for media as well as for putting documentary film as part of public culture in Indonesia. In-Docs operates as an NGO to work with its stakeholders in the global non-profit sector rather than in the economy of the film market[252]. Therefore, the culture of documentary film in Indonesia cannot be seen as separate from the interests of other non-profit organisation based on the narrative of democracy and post-authoritarian setting of Indonesia. Under the narrative of democracy, civic engagement and citizen participation, In-Docs are able to establish itself as a 'service organisation' that assist filmmakers to participate in the newly opened public sphere. Through the workshop it provides In-Docs has started a new culture of documentary filmmaking which combines the artistic documentary with civic engagement produced without having to depend on commissioning from broadcaster nor government support. Regardless of what critics say about the documentaries, when conducted properly the workshop can produce strong film such as *At Stake*, or *The Land Beneath the Fog* that appraised by critic and received awards in international film festivals.

While the role of international non-profit organisations such as Ford Foundation has been essential in providing annual funding, local NGOs are as important, both in providing resources – including financial resources in some cases – and in expanding the audience-base for documentary film. Through its stakeholders, the documentary film culture has been interlinked with publicness in terms of generating a civic engagement in the subject matter as well as connecting the audience to the aesthetics.

---

[252] Ragan Rhyne, "Film Festival Circuits and Stakeholders", in *The Film Festival Reader* (ed.) Dina Iordanova (St. Andrews: St. Andrews Film Studies, 2013), 135.

In this way, some savvy people, who have been involved both in the film community as well as the non-profit sector, are able to assert their double position as filmmakers and 'activists' at the same time as they are able to produce narratives that can connect the two worlds. These savvy people, such as Nugroho, Dinata, and in the case of In-Docs: Aziz and Harmayn, understand the logic of the two worlds (film communities and the national and international non-profit sector) and have been playing an important role as cultural brokers to make connections possible. Intan Paramaditha in her doctoral thesis observes these "young individuals who situate themselves in the transnational site and play the roles as cultural brokers"[253]. Looking at some individuals who have been travelling globally, linked to festival circuits, and then initiated a film festival or become a programmer in an arthouse cinema, Paramaditha stresses the importance of the entanglement between the local and global world through these individuals in the development of the Indonesian film scene[254]. These cultural brokers are rather similar to the concept of "sole trader" coined by Dina Iordanova and employed by Luke Robinson in looking at the role of certain individuals to initiate a film festival based the ability to facilitate the movement of film products[255]. These sole traders are:

> …men and women who actually circulate from film festival to film festival, creating personal connections between one event and the next. More likely to be self-employed than permanently attached to any single organization—"sole" in this sense as beholden to no one but themselves—they are

[253] Paramaditha, "Wild Child's Desire," 255.

[254] *Ibid*.

[255] Luke Robinson, "Sole Traders, Cultural Brokers, and Chinese-Language Film Festivals in the United Kingdom: The London Taiwan Cinefest and the Chinese Visual Festival" *Chinese Film Festivals: Sites of Translation* (eds.) Chris Berry and Luke Robinson (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2017), 195.

> nonetheless critical to facilitating the movement of film product between geographically distant and otherwise unrelated festivals.[256]

The quote above, and also the assertion from Paramaditha, emphasise the role of certain individuals who are able to travel in festival circuits, self-employed and working to connect the global festival circuits into the local events, mostly based on their capability in translating languages. However, I would like to expand this idea to people like Nugroho, Aziz and Harmayn as a kind of cultural broker. They work differently than "sole traders" or cultural brokers as asserted by Paramaditha, because they work within the non-profit sector that has its own logic rather than the 'film festival circuit', which is connected to the global economy market of the film industry.[257] The way they have been moving from one lexicon to another has placed them into a realm similar to that of cultural brokers in creating connections between the local, the global, and the national and managing frictions among those interests in their own organisations.

Also important is the entanglement between self-interest and public appearance where both are difficult to separate whenever the generating funding is observed carefully. Regardless of the non-profit appearance, organisations like In-Docs are part of the dual interests of its founder, similar to SET Foundation of Nugroho, even when the benefit is indirect. In the case of In-Docs, the organisation cannot be separated from the parent organisation, YMMFI, which also organises JIFFest. In a wider perspective, the position of this organisation is entangled with Shanty Harmayn's business ventures. Harmayn herself established a film import company, Tanimbar

---

[256] *Ibid.*

[257] Rhyne, "Film Festival Circuits," 136.

Pictures that she used to acquire screening rights for some films that made a big impact during JIFFest, while the latter operates partially with non-profit funding. At least two films were imported and distributed in Indonesia by Tanimbar that have already proven to be successful in JIFFest: *Amelie* (directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet, 2001) and *The Cup* (directed by Khyentse Norbu, 1999)[258]. This model has been dominant in terms of the effort made by filmmakers to link themselves with funding from the non-profit sector (local and international) as well as the civil society at large.

In-Docs as an organisation has been in the process of redefining its public engagement from the national to the regional level. Starting as a 'service organisation' to cater to the need to expand documentary film space (in light of the lack of infrastructure in documentary film) in Indonesia, In-Docs has moved this service up a level to regional documentary filmmaking to assert the importance of documentary film on a regional level. Therefore, its continuing existence can be justified. The traditional role of a civil society organisation that works with NGOs on human rights, civic education, and economic rights has been replaced with the role of providing a platform for 'imagining impact'[259] in more strategic ways. This move has a potential for the formation of a transnational public if the chances for critical engagement are used, but so far the publicness that has been generated remains in the expansion of the media sphere for film production.

However, observing In-Docs is about an organisation based in Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia, which has been aptly responding to social and political change on a

[258] This is recoded in mailing list conversation, in which I am a member of: https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/indomovie/conversations/topics/9207

[259] McLagan, "Imagining Impact", 305.

national and global level. This observation might have its own biases. Gerry van Klinken and Ward Berenschot in their research about "middle Indonesia" have pointed out the lack of province-based research on the possibility of this social class in provincial cities to instigate change, especially in the context of regional autonomy[260]. Although their research is about the "middle class" observed from a multi-disciplinary approach within the social sciences, their point about the lack of attention to provincial towns is somehow another problem in the study about Indonesia, particularly within film studies. In the next chapter, I discuss Festival Film Dokumenter (FFD) Yogyakarta, based in a provincial city located around 450 kilometres from Jakarta to further examine the documentary film culture, publicness and debate about the public at large.

---

[260] See Gerry van Klinken, "Introduction: Democracy, Markets and the Assertive Middle" in *In Seach of Middle Indonesia: Middle Classes in Provincial Towns* (eds.) Gerry van Klinken and Ward Berenschot (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), 28-31.

Chapter 5

Festival Film Dokumenter Yogyakarta: Celebrating Documentary Films and Beyond

This chapter examines the formation of the public and publicness in documentary film festivals in Indonesia. They are examined in the context of the 1998 political change that arguably brought about a new documentary film culture as a result of the way the media environment opened at that time. Festival Film Dokumenter (FFD), conducted annually in the city of Yogyakarta, is the case study, in which the particular media format (documentary film) and media event (film festival) are examined in their correlation to publicness and the dialogue about the public in general. This is done through examination of the film festival as an institution and various events at the festival.

The chapter starts by mapping out film festivals in Indonesia in a historical manner to look further into the role of these events in the formation of film culture in Indonesia. It then continues by examining the FFD itself. First, I examine Yogyakarta as the place of the festival to examine competition between cities, especially against Jakarta. This follows what Janet Harbord argues about cities and festivals, where festivals "advertise cities, set them in competition, region against region, global city against global city"[1]. This competition is important to examine political and cultural tensions, especially because during the New Order Jakarta was set as the centre of film culture in Indonesia. The examination of Yogyakarta as the site of the festival is necessary to see how the tensions shifted and reconfigured after the political change.

[1] Harbord, *Film Cultures*, 62.

Second, I examine the institutional aspect of the documentary film festival, especially how the festival come about, some key programmes and public talks and discussions. The organisation and operation of the festival are explored to obtain the notion of the event as a spatial and temporal platform for the creation of publicness and dialogue about the public in general.

To assess the way documentary film festivals are shaping documentary film culture and publicness, I pose several questions: What is the position of FFD among film festivals in Indonesia, and how do such events relate to film culture in general? How do film festivals participate in and how are they affected by the bigger social and political change that took place in 1998? What are their characteristics compared with film festivals in the New Order era and what does this say about publicness and dialogue about the public? How does publicness emerge from the institutional characteristics and aesthetical developments in the programming of the FFD, and what form does it take?

In examining socio-political engagement in FFD, I borrow the term "testimonial encounter" from Leshu Torchin[2]. This testimonial encounter is used to explain activist film festivals. However, the documentary film festival, despite not necessarily being categorised as a kind of activist film festival, is well suited to carry the function of making its audience think and act, and of playing a role in changing society[3]. Moreover, activist films and documentary films share "a mutual interest in the state

---

[2] Leshu Torchin, "Networked for Advocacy: Film Festivals and Activism," in *Film Festival Yearbook 4: Film Festival and Activism,* (ed.) Dina Iordanova and Leshu Torchin (St. Andrews: St. Andrews Film Studies, 2012), 2.

[3] Lyell Davies, "Off-screen Activities and the Documentary Film Screening" in *Activist Film Festivals: Towards A Political Subject,* (eds.) Sonia Tascon and Tyson Wils (Bristol: Intellect, 2017), 42.

of the real world, as well as an interest in change.[4]" Based on the similarity of particular functions, it makes sense to apply the concept of testimonial encounter, as the festival is seen as "the interface between the testimony or programmed films and the audiences hailed as witnessing publics, viewers who take responsibility for what they have seen and become ready to respond.[5]" I conclude by considering whether the festival, through its programming and off-screen activities, has managed to form a 'witnessing public' or type of audience ready to response to the issues raised by the documentary films (and off-screen activities) at the festival.

Besides the programming, particular attention is given to off-screen activities in the festival, especially the public talks and panel discussions, as they are considered to be the gestures that produce the space in which publicness may emerge. These post-screening activities can be thought of as the site for production of "less distant" viewing of the problems of others[6]. Along the same lines, Lyell Davies also posits the importance of "off-screen" activities in film festivals as a means of knowledge production that might give further impact to the screening. Davies mentions that off-screen activities are important because they can "serve as a place where, through the actions of those present, positions are taken, identities are claimed, correct viewing postures vis-à-vis the themes of the media exhibited are established and social movement participation is sustained[7]".

---

[4] Torchin, "Networked for Advocacy", 2.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Sonia Tascon and Tyson Wils, "Introduction" in *Activist Film Festivals: Towards A Political Subject*. (eds.) Sonia Tascon and Tyson Wils (Bristol: Intellect, 2017), 5.

[7] Lyell Davies, "Off-screen Activism," 46.

These approaches describe FFD as a site of the formation of political subjectivities. Again, FFD is not necessarily sufficient to be categorised as an activist film festival. However, Tascon and Wils define activism in their book as "an explicitly political action, which attempts to reach to the "heart" of the relations of power that contribute to the problem, and attempts to change the conditions of its creation.[8]" This definition has granted me a framework wide enough to describe any attempt to put power relations into question as activism. Looking at the case of Indonesia where the domination of centralised power was only relatively eased in 1998, this definition could be applied to an array of activities that might not have any direct political action.

The research on FFD as an exhibition platform for documentary film is also set against the backdrop of film festivals in Indonesia as part of documentary film culture in general. The historical situation of film festivals is given to connect FFD with the major political change of 1998, including possibilities of problematizing 'New Order visual culture'. Another factor in my analysis is to put FFD in the context of the friction between the local (or provincial), national, transnational and the global. This is done by considering festivals not merely as a media event, but by examining the way they also produce spaces for formation of publics around the discourses generated by these frictions.

[8] Tascon and Wils, "Introduction", 6.

Film festivals in Indonesia

During the New Order authoritarian regime, film institutions – including film festivals – were under tight control by the government. The gist of this situation is portrayed in Krishna Sen's book on Indonesian cinema during the New Order. Sen writes that cinema was under the auspices of the Department of Information, and this very department was moved into The Coordinating Ministry of Politics and Security (*Menko Polkam*) from its previous position under The Coordinating Ministry of People's Welfare in 1978. This move demonstrates that under the state apparatus, the security and propaganda dimension of films was emphasised rather than their 'artistic' dimension[9]. In this situation, film festivals were controlled or authorised by the government and linked directly to the government departments responsible for politics and security. Festivals fell under political communication functions rather than celebration of artistic merits of film.

The state sanction on film festivals went as far as using the term 'festival' only for Festival Film Indonesia or FFI. According to Sen, FFI was the single biggest event for Indonesian cinema during the New Order Era[10]. Originally FFI was established by people in the film industry to promote Indonesian cinema, especially as a way for local films to compete against the domination of imported films, in particular those from Hollywood. Over the years, the state had been intervening in the event, so organisers had to get permission from the Department of Information, which also gave approval to the festival theme. FFI was annexed by the state and became more bureaucratized, until it ceased in 1992 because of a lack of Indonesian films produced

[9] Sen, *Indonesian Cinema*, 50.

[10] *Ibid*, 53.

that year.[11] In 2004, it was rejuvenated with a relatively similar format, where the main event was the awarding night, similar to the Academy Awards ceremony, and with very few film screenings[12].

The dominating position of Jakarta as the centre of film culture was also apparent in the FFI during the New Order even when the festival was held outside Jakarta. As per Sen's description, when the festival was conducted outside Jakarta people turned their attention to Indonesian film, or at least become starstruck by Indonesian movie stars even when they did not really watch Indonesian films[13]. Visits from film stars and celebrities from Jakarta played a role, as described by Sen:

> Indonesian cinema really comes to town when the festivals go provincial. At the Semarang festival in 1980 and the Surabaya one in 1981 thousands of people turned out to see the 'procession of stars' through the main city street. Throughout the night huge crowds turned up at every station to meet the special train that carried hundreds of Jakarta film people to Semarang. Dozens of people on the streets of Semarang and Surabaya told me that they would go and see this and that film now they had touched the hand of a star or had a brother who had kissed an actress through a glass pane of the train.[14]

Celebrities from Jakarta were the main staple for the production of a certain 'publicness' as they drew crowds and gathered attention from both provincial and national media, making FFI the biggest event for cinema in Indonesia. Moreover, by the early 1980s, President Soeharto was trying to gain a tighter grip on society because of some sharp criticism from Petisi 50, an opposition group who used to be government ministers and military officers under the previous administration[15]. This

---

[11] van Heeren, *Contemporary Indonesian Film*, 40-43.

[12] *Ibid,* 44.

[13] *Ibid*.

[14] *Ibid*, 54.

[15] On Petisi 50 see Richard Robison and Vedi Hadiz, *Reorganising Power in Indonesia: The Politics of Oligarchy in an Age of Markets* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 120.

tighter grip involved cracking down on and dismissing any social or pressure groups considered to be disloyal to the government, and unifying any professional associations, with only government-sanctioned organisation allowed to exist[16]. This unification also happened in media and film organisations and the ensuing discourses. Even terminology was affected, including the phrase 'film festival'.

In 1987, Chand Parvez Servia, the owner of a film distribution company called PT Kharisma Jabar Film[17], together with journalists and some local writers, co-established an awarding night for films he distributed in the area allotted to him[18]. They called this awarding ceremony event Festival Film Bandung (Bandung Film Festival or FFB), and it was located in the city of Bandung, around 160 kilometres from Jakarta. Regardless of using the name 'festival', the organiser did not hold any public screenings or any other activities. The awards were meant to be given to the films circulated by the distributors in the area, who also owned one of the biggest movie theatres in the city. Nevertheless, the FFB received a letter from the then Department of Information 'suggesting' that they should replace the term 'festival' because there is only one film festival in Indonesia, the FFI. The organiser then changed the name to Forum Film Bandung (Bandung Film Forum, FFB) to avoid

---

[16] See Eryanto Nugroho, "Bill on societal organisations (RUU Ormas) and freedom of association in Indonesia" in *The International Journal of Not-for-profit Law,* 15, no.1, (March 2013), available online http://www.icnl.org/research/journal/vol15iss1/special_2.htm, accessed 9th December 2018.

[17] "Chand Parwez Servia – President Director," *Starvision*, accessed on 14th December 2018, http://www.klikstarvision.com/page/about, (My translation).

[18] "*Sejarah Festival Film Bandung*" (History of Bandung Film Festival), Forum Film Bandung, accessed on 10 April 2017, http://www.festivalfilmbandung.com/p/berawal-pada-tahun-1987-sejumlah_23.html, (My translation).

further complication[19]. On its website, FFB explains that moment in history using these words to describe itself:

> FFB tries to place its existence not to contradict with any existing rules and regulations, and its activities are also directed not to overlap with the existing institutions (such as FFI, Kine Klub and others). Instead, it will support them.[20]

However, it returned to using the term 'festival' again after the political change in 1998. This exemplifies the change in film institutions and media environment in general in post-1998 Indonesia, as I will show later with the rise of other film festivals in Indonesia initiated by civil society without any support from the state.

On aesthetics, Sen mentioned the FFI's position as the site for building centralised artistic values for Indonesian cinema by "representing the values, ideals and interests of the urban intelligentsia, of which the filmmakers themselves are a part against those of the bureaucrats and financiers"[21]. As a state-sanctioned institution, the FFI played the role of determining aesthetic standards for Indonesian cinema during the New Order. Katinka van Heeren shows that the films that were nominated for or received accolades in the festival were those that bolstered representations of values that lived up to the New Order's norms about national development[22]. Over the years, the themes of FFI also evolved, showing how the state's interest in the festival had grown, and how its role in the organisation of the FFI had gradually increased[23].

---

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] "*FFB berusaha menempatkan keberadaannya tidak bertentangan dengan aturan dan peraturan yang ada, kegiatannya juga diarahkan agar tak tumpang-tindih dengan lembaga-lembaga yang sudah ada (seperti FFI, Kine Klub, dan sebagainya) bahkan berusaha saling mendukung*." See: *ibid.*

[21] Sen, *Indonesian Cinema*, 55.

[22] van Heeren, *Contemporary Indonesian Film,* 42.

[23] *Ibid*.

Van Heeren notes some themes foregrounded by the FFI during the New Order era including: from "Cinema as a powerful means of communication for the sake of national development[24]" (1978), and "We declare that the character of Indonesian film should be cultural educational[25]" (1979), to "Intensify the role of Indonesian cinema as a medium of communication and information in order to contribute to the success of the fourth Pelita (Pembangunan Lima Tahun; Five Year Development Programme of the state)"[26]. In other words, the New Order's ideology of national development has occupied the central theme of the FFI for many years. Van Heeren sees those discourses as practices that constructed the image of Indonesia as a nation state and that centralised around the idea of national development. However, the festival then stopped altogether in 1992 because of the low number of films produced that year. It was resurrected again in 2004 with a new approach.

Before the FFI restarted in 2004, some other film festivals were held in the country by civil society, such as the Jakarta International Film Festival or JIFFest (started in 1999), the smaller and now-defunct Festival Film Pendek by Yayasan Konfiden (started in 1999), Festival Film Dokumenter (FFD) Yogyakarta, started in 2002, and Q-Film Festival, also started in 2002. I will discuss this post-1998 festival scene to give an insight into the character of film festivals organised by civil society in the context of film culture in post-authoritarian Indonesia.

---

[24] '*Perfilman sebagai sarana komunikasi yang ampuh demi pembangungan nasional*', in *Ibid*, 43.

[25] '*Kultural edukatif kita jadikan watak film Indonesia*', in *Ibid*, 43. See the proposal to put documentary film as cultural educational by Peransi in the previous chapter.

[26] '*Meningkatkan peranan film Indonesia sebagai sarana komunikasi dan informasi dalam ikut mensukseskan Pelita IV*', in *Ibid*.

The first JIFFest was conducted on 20-28 November 1999, initiated by Indonesian producer and filmmaker Shanty Harmayn[27] and Franco-American festival organiser Natacha Devillers[28]. JIFFest was meant to provide a platform for art and international films that did not make it into major distribution in Indonesia. Films screened in this festival were mostly from global festival circuits, documentaries, short films and a small number of experimental films. In each of its events, JIFFest always had a dedicated screen for Indonesian films to be premiered, and in 2006, they began a competition section for Indonesian films[29] to compete for the Citra Award, the highest award for Indonesian filmmakers given by FFI. Over the years, the festival has gained a good reputation and a loyal audience, making it the biggest festival in Southeast Asia in terms of audience numbers[30]. Before it went dormant in 2011 because of lack of funding, JIFFest played an important role in alternative film culture in Indonesia as it provided a platform for local filmmakers to showcase their work, especially at the time when cinema chains were reluctant to screen films from novice Indonesian filmmakers. It was in this spirit that Indonesian documentary films were also getting their spot in the festival[31].

JIFFest's operation is also very different to FFI, especially in its off-screen activities such as workshops, distributor meetings and other fringe events. These non-screening activities made JIFFest a facilitator for the production and circulation of

---

[27] See chapter 4 on In-Docs.

[28] van Heeren, *Contemporary Indonesian Film*, 46.

[29] Silvia Wong, "Jiffest to Launch Competition for Indonesian Film". *Screendaily*, 22 November 2006, accessed on 15 May 2017, http://www.screendaily.com/jiffest-to-launch-competition-for-indonesian-films/4029700.article.

[30] Adam Knee, "Film Festival Downsizing, The Tale of Two Southeast Asian Cities", *Asian Cinema*, 20, no.1, (Spring/Winter 2009): 222.

[31] See chapter 4 on In-Docs.

films and for helping Indonesian filmmakers to network with their international counterparts, including programmers from international film festivals. Adam Knee, lecturer at National University of Singapore at the time, noted the roles of JIFFest:

> ...making active interventions in promoting and fostering a newly reviving Indonesian film industry, both by showcasing all of a given year's local feature production in free public screenings and by sponsoring an annual script development competition, the winners of which receive funding for film production and training in script development workshops.[32]

Post-1998 festivals like JIFFest took over the role of FFI as the main public event for cinema in Indonesia. JIFFest has managed to attract international guests, including some big names such as director Peter Weir (2000), Iranian director Jafar Panahi (2001), and Korean director Lee Chang Dong (2005)[33]. The documentary section of JIFFest, which is discussed further in the chapter 4 about In-Docs, has also managed to attract many reputable names such as multi-award winner James Nachtwey[34] and Mark Achbar, whose documentary was screened at the festival. Some of the international guests came to the festival to participate in workshops and masterclasses for local filmmakers, such as Pimpaka Towira (Thailand), Tan Pin Pin (Singapore) and Hong Kong-based producer Lorna Tee[35].

Another festival that began after the political change was Festival Film Pendek (Short Film Festival). It was an affectionate name for Independent Film-Video Festival, organised by the Konfiden Foundation, as it screened only short films to foster

---

[32] Adam Knee, "Film Festival", 222.

[33] Anonymous, "*Pendahuluan*" (Introduction), 14 June 2009, *Analisa Unsur Poster Jiffest '07*, (Analysis of Jiffest 07 Poster), accessed 14 September 2017, http://analisaunsurposterjiffest07.blogspot.co.uk/2009/06/pendahuluan.html (My translation).

[34] *Ibid.*

[35] *Ibid.*

independent filmmaking that was growing shortly after *Reformasi*. The festival started in 1999 as a response to the growing number of film communities and burgeoning film productions. The organising community, Konfiden, in the words of one of its founding members, Agus Mediarta, started the festival with a lack of knowledge about Indonesian short film and the festival is an attempt to overcome this issue by building databases and networks among film communities[36]. According to Mediarta:

> They [Konfiden] gradually realized the importance of documentation and forming networks of film communities, alongside organizing the film festival. Konfiden's programme thus included establishing a film library, publishing a regular newsletter, forming a film community network, and holding short film screenings in different sites around Java[37].

Because of this festival, the organisation became a node for fostering socialisation and public appreciation and production of short film in Indonesia[38]. The festival has become one of the most important events in giving opportunities to novice filmmakers to screen their films. Some 'graduates' from this festival include successful filmmakers such as film star Dennis Adhiswara[39] and award-winning director Ifa Isfansyah[40]. The festival then stopped in 2010 because Konfiden decided

---

[36] Agus Mediarta, "Konfiden and the Promotion of Indonesian Short Films", *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies,* 8, No. 2 (2007): 308.

[37] *Ibid*.

[38] Dimas Jayasrana, one of Konfiden activists, sees this festival as part of short film history in Indonesia. See Dimas Jayasrana, "A fragmented History: Sort Films in Indonesia", 29 November 2015, *Cinema Poetica*, accessed 12 December 2018, http://cinemapoetica.com/a-fragmented-history-short-films-in-indonesia/.

[39] "*Sepanjang Jalan Film pendek Indonesia*" (Along the path of Indonesian short films), 20 March 2017, C2O Library and Collabtive, accessed 1 June 2017, https://c2o-library.net/2017/03/sepanjang-jalan-film-pendek-indonesia/. (My translation).

[40] Anonymous, "*Harap tenang ada ujian*" (Please be quiet, exam in progress), no date, *Kalimantan Timur* accessed 1 June 2017, http://kalimantan-timur.tl.web.id/en3/1928-1812/Harap-Tenang-Ada-Ujian_141257_kalimantan-timur-tl.html. (My translation).

to change their core programme[41]. Konfiden Foundation changed their course of work to join forces with an online Indonesian film catalogue, www.filmindonesia.or.id, focusing on their cataloguing and archiving activities, rather than film screenings and festivals[42].

Another important festival is Q Film Festival, which specialised in screening gay, lesbian and queer films as well as conducting talks and events on queer issues. The festival started in 2002 as a small film club for films with LGBTQ themes, before it was expanded into a festival by freelance journalists who were involved in the club[43]. The screening venues were cultural centres in Jakarta, such as the British Council and Goethe Institute, and the festival received a lot of support from those centres[44].

The festival ran smoothly for a long time, but things changed after a protest at the 9th event held in 2010. The protest was organised by Islamic Defender Front (FPI), an Islamic pressure group with a reputation for smashing bars, attacking transgender people and targeting other groups they consider blasphemous[45]. FPI threatened the organisers by saying that they would burn down the venue if they did not stop the festival[46]. Since then, the festival has receded its public appearance. In 2011, I was

---

[41] "Konfiden," Koalisi Seni Indonesia, accessed 16 December 2018, http://koalisiseni.or.id/tentang-ksi/jawa/yayasan-konfiden/. (My translation).

[42] *Ibid.*

[43] Vauriz Bestika, "Pelabelan Diri dalam Q Film Festival" (Self-labelling in Q Film Festival), 22 September 2015, *Cinema Poetica*, accessed 1 June 2017, http://cinemapoetica.com/pelabelan-diri-dalam-q-film-festival. (My translation).

[44] "British Council Film at Q! Film Festival", British Council Indonesia, accessed 1 June 2017, https://www.britishcouncil.id/en/events/british-council-film-q-film-festival-2015-100-human.

[45] Ben Child, "Gay film festival attacked by masked Islamic protesters", 29 September 2011, *The Guardian*, accessed 1 June 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/film/2010/sep/29/gay-film-festival-jakarta-attacked.

[46] *Ibid*.

invited to attend the opening night of the festival, conducted in the National Archive building, via an invitation sent directly to my email address. The invitation had a disclaimer that it should not be distributed without the organiser's permission. All the screenings have become members' only events, and audience members must now register on the festival website. The violent threat also created a turning point for the festival, after which they allied themselves with civil society groups, and they began to conduct fringe events to attract a wider audience and to make the agenda more inclusive. In the 2011, the festival broadened its scope to invite other LGBTQ groups to join. It also put forward its own agenda as part of a 'human rights' agenda[47], taking the human rights group, Kontras (Commission against forced-disappearance and for victims of violence), as an ally in organising the festival[48]. This move has marked a shift in film culture in Indonesia, in which cinematic events have begun to seek support from civil society groups as a way of advancing their joint cause to the public.

Meanwhile, after the *Reformasi*, FFI was rejuvenated in 2004. The organiser of the festival was a committee established specially for that purpose, under the purview of and funded by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture. The event still centred on its awards night, but additional activities such as seminars and discussions about film were also held. The role of FFI as the guardian of film aesthetics in Indonesia has been maintained. This role was questioned massively in 2007 when FFI jury chose *Ekskul* (directed by Fio Nuala, 2006) as the best movie of that year. This led to massive outrage among filmmakers because the film was allegedly using music scores

[47] Vauriz Bestika, "Pelabelan Diri".

[48] Nico Novito, "Q! Film Fest Raises Awareness on LGBTIQ Issues", no date, *Jakarta Globe*, accessed 1 June 2017, http://jakartaglobe.id/archive/q-film-fest-raises-awareness-on-lgbtiq-issues/.

from other films without rights clearance. Then the previous Citra Award awardees in post-1998 FFI returned their Citra Awards to the state as a protest questioning the credibility and transparency of the FFI in general[49]. The protest took a bigger turn when these disappointed filmmakers and artists formed Masyarakat Film Indonesia (Indonesian Film Society or MFI) and decided to boycott the FFI for the following years, demanding bigger reform of film law and regulations in general[50].

Looking at these post-1998 film festivals organised by civil society group, it is worth making a comparison with FFI, because there are some notable differences in the festival characteristics and circumstances. The "publicness" of FFI during the New Order stemmed from the advancement of film aesthetics beyond the screen and making them public. This has been done with attention to aesthetic merit in the context of national development, and this resulted in the public function of film being placed in the framework of political mobilisation. Another aspect of publicness in the FFI is the parade of A-listers to display the glamourous side of the film industry[51], while the real public affairs were hidden from the public and public discussion, even about films, was kept to a minimum[52].

---

[49] Liputan6.com, "*Puluhan insan film mengembalikan Piala Citra*" (Dozens of 'film people' returned their Citra Awards) in *Liputan6.com*, accessed on 15 May 2017, http://news.liputan6.com/read/135217/puluhan-insan-film-mengembalikan-piala-citra. (My translation). As a recipient of Citra Award in film criticism in FFI 2005 and 2006 I also joined the movement by returning my trophies, and then getting involve in the subsequent movement, the Indonesian Film Society or Masyarakat Film Indonesia (MFI).

[50] Masyarakat Film Indonesia, "*DPR dan Presiden diminta tinjau kembali UU tentang Perfilman*" (Parliament and President asked to review film law), in *Masyarakat Film Indonesia*, 8 October 2009, , accessed on 16 May 2017, https://masyarakatfilmindonesia.wordpress.com/2009/10/08/dpr-dan-presiden-diminta-tinjau-kembali-uu-tentang-perfilman/. (My translation).

[51] Sen, *Indonesian Cinema*, 54.

[52] *Ibid*.

For the post-1998 festivals, publicness comes from different directions in new political settings. In the case of Festival Film Pendek, publicness comes from connection to grassroots film communities, where the film festival has given a chance for novice and aspiring filmmakers to screen their films for the first time[53]. The festival has responded to the political openness and provided the chance for a new film culture to grow as part of public culture. Another form of publicness is the emergence of LGBT culture as part of public culture that has been promoted by Q-Film Festival. The making public of this culture was then responded to by the conservative side of Indonesian society and this remains a big issue until today.

The post-1998 festival also generates new film culture through the link to international festival circuits with the attendance of international guests as jurors, workshop facilitators, and masterclass tutors, enabling Indonesian filmmakers to participate in networking activities. The fact these film festivals are part of an international film circuit has been very important for the new generation of filmmakers in Indonesia as it exposes them to opportunities outside their own country. This is in line with de Valck's assertion that it is important to understand film festivals as being embedded in a global network of such events[54]. This new culture has opened a possibility of publicness for Indonesian filmmakers where they are now connected to international public.

---

[53] Hafiz Rancajale, "*Sekarang, Filem Pendek (tidak) di Tangan Konfiden"*, (Now Short Film is (not) in the Hands of Konfiden), in Jurnal Footage, 23 November 2009, accessed 17 December 2018, http://jurnalfootage.net/v4/sekarang-filem-pendek-tidak-di-tangan-konfiden/. (My translation).

[54] de Valck, *Film Festivals*, 133-4.

Another point of comparison between FFI and post-1998 film festivals is that FFI was more similar to an awards night than a film festival. Therefore, film screenings were not a main staple of FFI, especially when the festival was conducted in Jakarta[55]. The event rarely screened films, and when it did, they were of films that were already popular in Jakarta, mostly made by Jakarta-based studios, playing to a provincial audience as a one-way communication meant to assert the notion of national ideology, or at the least, national-centred aesthetics. In the post-1998 festivals, the main event has been the film screenings, followed by various off-screen activities for filmmakers and others interested in the burgeoning film industry. Festivals such as JIFFest have provided a platform for novice domestic filmmakers to have their world premiere, which is also attended by international guests such as festival programmers and film distributors[56]. FFI never performed this role in its history.

To conclude this section, I would like to go back Janet Harbord, who asserts that film festivals are especially important in examining film cultures because festivals are part of the exhibition circuits that provide an interplay of discourses in a designated space of transaction and "bring together the determinants of film culture under the duress of space-time compression or the media event"[57]. As a media event, a film festival takes place at a specific time and place, attended by particular types of people – critics, journalists, film programmers, film buyers, and cinephiles, – whose attention to film elevates the discourses and practices to an extraordinary level in comparison with an everyday situation. Here the post-1998 festivals act as

---

[55] Sen, *Indonesian Cinema*, 54.

[56] Anonymous, "Pendahuluan".

[57] Harbord, *Film Cultures*, 60-61.

exhibitors[58], which provides a possibility for the formation of publicness, as they enable films to meet their public in the proper theatrical setting and on a big screen. Considering the lack of opportunities to screen Indonesian films in the early 2000s, this exhibition role was very important in contributing to the formation of film culture in Indonesia, as well as making public more challenging themes, such as LGBT topics. Film festivals, regardless of temporality, can create publicness based on audiences' attention to films and their topics, which have been foregrounded in the heightened circumstances of the festival. As for documentary film festivals, in my case study this engagement with the social-political world is greater, as the films address viewers perceived as having a particular concern about the state of the world. This documentary film festival culture would provide the chance of the festival to be, in the term used by Leshu Torchin, a "testimonial encounter"[59] where publicness would be examined from the civic engagement formed in the festival.

The next section discusses about Yogyakarta as an arena where publicness is formed with regards to film festivals. This is done because film festivals are site-specific events and this is important for looking at competition among cities and a city's place in the network of global cities[60].

---

[58] Dina Iordanova, "The Film Festival Circuit," in *The Film Festival Reader* (ed.) Dina Iordanova (St. Andrews: St. Andrews Film Studies, 2013), 110.

[59] Leshu Torchin, "Networked for Advocacy: Film Festivals and Activism," in *Film Festival Yearbook 4: Film Festivals and Activism* (eds.) Dina Iordanova and Leshu Torchin (St. Andrews: St. Andrews Film Studies, 2012), 2-3.

[60] Harbord, *Film Cultures*, 61.

Yogyakarta as the arena

Since film festivals are site-specific events[61], but also exist in a global network, this is my starting point to discuss the interplay between the idea of local, national and global in Indonesian film culture, and the idea of publicness. A film festival, per Harbord, is a "manifestation of the way space is produced"[62]. Therefore, a film festival is seen as an advertising tool for cities to compete against other cities. In this light, FFD is seen as playing an important role in promoting Yogyakarta as a particular type of space in competition against other cities, especially Jakarta, which has been regarded as the centre of Indonesian cinema[63]. Here I see FFD has become a site for an alternative public compared with the cinema culture that has been created by film festivals under the New Order.

FFD is held in the provincial city of Yogyakarta, 450 kilometres from Jakarta, and it is the first and the biggest documentary film festival in Southeast Asia. Compared with other major post-1998 film festivals such as JIFFest, Q-Film Festival and *Festival Film Pelajar* (Student Film Festival), it is currently the longest running in the country. Established in 2002, the festival has been conducted in Yogyakarta, a city known for its vibrant cultural activities and home to many prominent Indonesian artists, including the famous Indonesian filmmaker Garin Nugroho[64]. Some Yogyakarta-based

---

[61] Janet Harbord, "Film Festival – Time-event" in *Film Festival Reader* (ed.) Dina Iordanova (St. Andrews: St. Andrews Film Studies, 2013). 127.

[62] Harbord, *Film Cultures*, 61.

[63] The notion of Jakarta as the centre for filmmaking practices has also been argued by senior journalist and film critic, JB Kristanto, who mentions that 90% of film productions take place in or use Jakarta as a setting. See JB Kristanto, *Nonton Film Nonton Indonesia*, (*Watching Film, Watching Indonesia*), (Jakarta: Kompas, 2004), 25. (My translation).

[64] Budi Irawanto, "Contemporary Indonesian Independent Documentaries in the Yogyakarta Documentary Film Festival: Notes from the Juror's Seat," *Asian Cinema* 21, no. 2 (2010): 154.

researchers also claim that the city is the site where film communities are thriving and is considered a leader when it comes to the production and circulation of films and ideas related to film[65]. Various festivals, such as Jogja Netpac Asia Film Festival (JAFF)[66] and Festival Film Yogyakarta (FFD), are held annually in Yogyakarta, making the city attractive to novice filmmakers, and making it easier for them to circulate their films into international festivals[67].

Many anecdotes refer to the special characteristics of Yogyakarta that have enabled the city to host various festivals, such descriptions of Yogyakarta as 'city of culture' or 'city of students'[68]. However, in a book commissioned by the Office of Culture of Yogyakarta, four Yogyakarta-based film and media researchers analyse the characteristics and link them to the filmmaking practices that uniquely belong to Yogyakarta. These researchers emphasise the term 'independent' or 'film indie' as it is explained as self-sufficiency of production and circulation of films[69]. They explain the term indie here:

> Despite disputes over the term independent filmmakers, it helps to describe the film industry in Yogyakarta, which is relatively disconnected with that of Indonesia that is based in Jakarta. In general, the independent films are not screened in the theatres run by Jakarta-based movie business. Likewise, the indie filmmakers that do not attend the film school, which is again based in Jakarta. Equipment and independent film workers are mostly obtained from the surrounding areas. In

---

[65] See Dyna Herlina Suwarto, Firly Annisa, Kurniawan Saputro and Zaki Habibi, *Mapping Filmmakers in Yogyakarta,* (Yogyakarta: Dinas Kebudayaan Provinsi DIY, 2015), 2.

[66] JAFF was initiated by the famous Indonesian filmmaker, Garin Nugroho, in 2006 with support from some other prominent people in Yogyakarta, including film scholar Budi Irawanto. Some young filmmakers at the time, such as Ifa Isfansyah, Ismail Basbeth and Yosep Anggi Noen, were also involved in the early years of the festival. The festival has been supported by Nugroho's long-time friend, Singaporean film critic and programmer Philip Cheah who provides consultancy in programming. See https://jaff-filmfest.org/

[67] See Suwarto, et.al. *Mapping*, 4.

[68] Tito Imanda. "Pembuat Film dan Praktek Film di Yogyakarta (Filmmakers and Filmmaking Practices in Yogyakarta)" (PhD thesis, University of Indonesia, 2016), 1-3. (My translation).

[69] *Ibid,* 2.

> brief, the term independent in this context is not about inventing independent art ideas of movement to free from certain economic and political power, but is more about self-sufficiency due to certain circumstances and disconnection.[70]

Regardless of the emphasis on the self-sufficiency of the film practices, this narrative exemplifies the assumed hierarchical relations that see Jakarta as the centre of film culture in Indonesia and other cities as sitting at lower positions. The authors of this book argue that Yogyakarta has managed to develop its own practices that are independent from other areas and this narrative of breaking from the domination of Jakarta was the main theme of the discussion surrounding the idea of '*film independen*' or 'film indie' in Indonesia during the 2000s, as observed by Katinka van Heeren[71]. It seems that this idea remains an appealing way to approach the geopolitical circumstances of film culture in Yogyakarta even though van Heeren said the idea of breaking the domination of Jakarta has receded in 2003 because it has lost its appeal.[72]

Another notion of breaking away from the domination of Jakarta is also emphasised by the non-profit, and community-based operation of film culture in Yogyakarta especially when it is compared to Jakarta. There has been an assumption that film culture in Jakarta is dominated by corporate interests, which is based on global economic domination[73], while film culture in Yogyakarta is mostly based on

---

[70] *Ibid*.

[71] van Heeren, *Contemporary Indonesian Film*, 38.

[72] *Ibid*.

[73] See for example Novi Kurnia, a famous film scholar based in Yogyakarta writes her master's dissertation on the Indonesian film industry as part of Hollywood domination. Kurnia uses the world system approach in her dissertation, asserting the imperialistic nature and content domination in the Indonesian film industry which is based in Jakarta. See Novi Kurnia, "Industri Perfilman Indonesia: Analisis Ekonomi Politik terhadap Industri Perfilman Indonesia dalam Perspektif World-System Theory" (Indonesian Film Industry: Political Economic

non-commercial and community interests. This is shown in at least two mission statements of the two biggest film festivals in Yogyakarta, Jogja Netpac Film Festival (JAFF) and also FFD. Officially JAFF goes with this statement:

> JAFF goes on to focus in organising and developing Asian cinema and attempting to ground a film festival to make it significant for society, education, entertainment, tourism and art and culture.[74]

The use of the word 'tourism' might carry connotations that the festival has an economic function, but the other words, 'society', 'education', 'art and culture', imply the main function of this festival is not merely economic benefit. A relatively similar characteristic is apparent with the FFD, whose mission statement radiates an even stronger non-profit tone:

> FFD is meant to provide space for activities on creation, appreciation and dissemination, also education, on documentary film in its wider meaning.[75]

This mission statement is particularly poignant in asserting the non-commercial nature of the festival.

The breaking from domination and competition against Jakarta is bolstered with the support from the provincial government of Yogyakarta. The Yogyakarta provincial government has been enthusiastic and ambitious in supporting other cultural activities, including various festivals in the city to build the image of Yogyakarta as a

---

Analysis of the Indonesian Film Industry from a World-System Theory Perspective), (Master diss., University of Indonesia, 2005). (My translation)

[74] The Indonesian text: *Penyelenggaraan JAFF berangkat pada fokus organisasi dan perkembangan sinema Asia dan berusaha membumikan festival film agar memiliki peran bagi masyarakat, pendidikan, hiburan, pariwisata dan seni budaya.* See Imam Karyadi Aryanto, *Festival Film di Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, 2015* (*Film Festivals in Yogyakarta, 2015*), (Yogyakarta: Dinas Kebudayaan Provinsi DIY, 2016), 25.

[75] The original text: *Penyelenggaraan FFD dimaksudkan untuk memberi ruang bagi aktivitas penciptaan, apresiasi dan sosialisasi, juga pendidikan di bidang film dokumenter dalam arti yang lebih luas*. See, Aryanto, *Festival Film*, 5

city of culture. Thanks to the Special Regional Ordinance[76] of Yogyakarta (affectionately called "Perda Istimewa"), the provincial Office of Culture has established a special section on film, and it claims that this section has been helping and supporting the development of the film industry since 2009[77].

Officially, the head of the Office of Culture of Yogyakarta Umar Priyono has stressed the importance of building Yogyakarta as a centre of art and culture that may even surpass the position of Jakarta. He mentions that film festivals play an important role in advancing Yogyakarta as a prominent city on a regional and even global level, as mentioned in a book commissioned by the Office on Film Festivals in the Special Region of Yogyakarta:

> ...Special Region of Yogyakarta is a region with specialties and one of them is the culture sector. This is stated and implied in long term vision of the city development initiated by the Governor (to make Yogyakarta) as a prominent centre of culture in Southeast Asia in 2025. One of the potentials that can be optimised to reach that objective is to develop city or region-based film festivals with a global scale[78].

On the one hand, the city's ambition is to make Yogyakarta as one of the prominent centres for cultural development within the region of Southeast Asia, while, on the other hand FFD – a local and community-based film festival – is also

---

[76] This is a local government regulation that gives privileges to Yogyakarta as one of the 'special regions' in the country that may have local specificities. This regulation is guaranteed for several provincial government based on the regional autonomy Law from the national government. See this in Suwarto, et.al. *Mapping*, vii.

[77] The claim is made by Umar Priyono, the head of the Office of Culture, *DIY* in Suwarto, et.al. *Mapping*, vii.

[78] *".. Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta sebagai daerah yang memiliki keistimewaan salah satunya dari sektor kebudayaan. Hal tersebut tersurat dan tersirat dalam visi pembangunan jangka panjang Gubernur DIY sebagi pusat kebudayaan terkemuka di Asia Tenggara pada tahun 2025. Salah satu potensi kebudayaan yang dapat dioptimalisasi dalam mencapai tujuan tersebut adalah dengan mengembangkan pelaksanaan festival film berbasis kota/daerah yang mumpuni dengan skala global".* In Aryanto, *Festival Film*, vii-viii.

included in this ambition. This contradiction shows the nature of the tension around identity formation where on one side there is an appeal for the city to be a hub for transnational imagination (of Southeast Asia as a geographical entity) while on the other community-based institutions such as FFD have been trying to break away from the domination of national culture. This friction of the local, national and transnational is discussed in the next section, which focuses on the role of FFD in documentary film culture in Indonesia and the way publicness is shaped in the festival.

Celebrating documentary film in post-1998 Indonesia

This section discusses FFD, and how it came about to be a festival characterised by community-based activities and on into the way it is now. This transformation covers the development of the community group that becomes the base for FFD and how it created links to the national and international non-profit sector, rather than to global festival circuits, to sustain the festival.

Many post-1998 film festivals in Indonesia were begun as community activities, as extensions of pre-existing screening programmes. The organisation behind the FFD started as a community group called Gelanggang Audio Visual Universitas Gajah Mada (Audio Visual Arena of the Gajah Mada University or GLAV UGM), operating under the auspices of the University of Gajah Mada. The first festival director, Herlambang Yudho[79], was an activist from the community and an avid fan of documentary film[80].

[79] Aryanto, *Festival Film*, 48.

[80] Dwi Sujati Nugraheni, interview with the author, 12 September 2017.

GLAV regularly held film screenings in the student hall, attended by students from various universities in Yogyakarta and members of other film clubs in the surrounding area[81]. The screenings were always conducted with speakers to talk about the film and its issues[82]. One of the co-founders, Dwi Sujati Nugraheni, explains that FFD was established to give a stimulus for documentary filmmaking particularly in Yogyakarta[83]. In the early 2000s, there were more than 100 film communities that made and screened films independently as an experiment to welcome digital technology as film distribution and filmmaking became more affordable. Nugraheni estimates there were 130 film communities, but all of them made fiction film – there were none making documentary film. The idea of making a documentary film festival had been proposed by the activists in GLAV, but they could not afford the financial outlay of organising the festival and providing the prize for the competition section[84]. They considered a competition section as vital, because it was expected that the prize would be that main draw that would motivate film communities in Yogyakarta and the surrounding cities to make documentary film[85].

This idea of making a documentary film festival was realised when Herlambang and other GLAV members met Norbertus Nuranto, owner of Tembi Rumah Budaya (Tembi Cultural House), a hotel that has also been used as cultural centre located in Bantul, a small city adjacent to Yogyakarta. Nuranto is a son of P. Swantoro, one of the co-founders of *Kompas* newspaper, which has the largest circulation of any in

---

[81] Alia Damaihati, interview with the author, 8 September 2017.

[82] Nugraheni, interview, 2017.

[83] *Ibid.*

[84] *Ibid.*

[85] Norbertus Nuranto, interview with the author, 18 November 2016.

Indonesia, and he has played a very important part in keeping the festival running. *Kompas* itself is known as a newspaper for educated middle-class readers and Kompas Group is known for its commitment to supporting various cultural activities in Indonesia. Nuranto established Rumah Tembi in Yogyakarta as a cultural space combined with a commercial hotel. Tembi is a private commercial entity, owned and managed by Nuranto and his colleagues, yet Nuranto has developed Tembi as 'cultural house', or 'an open space for appreciation of artworks and archive of history and culture'[86]. Tembi has a motto that sounds almost as if it was meant to be applied directly to the documentary film community: 'the past is always current'[87]. As a cultural space, Tembi facilitates many public events, including film and music events, and almost all of them are free of charge[88]. Nuranto, also a music aficionado, uses Tembi as a place for hosting foreign musicians doing their study and residency in Indonesia, with the condition that the public may come to watch them perform their compositions[89]. In this way, Nuranto believes that many musicians from the area can learn from this, making it a fair exchange for both sides[90]. Later, this event was turned into a music festival in itself, Tembi Music Festival. Nuranto sees FFD as the documentary film equivalent of this event and he decided to fund FFD annually until it manages to generate its own funding[91].

---

[86] The original text: "*ruang terbuka apresiasi karya dan rumah dokumentasi sejarah dan budaya*," see, "Tentang Rumah Tembi", (About Tembi House), Berita Tembi Rumah Budaya, accessed on 25 March 2017, https://www.tembi.net/tentang-rumah-tembi/. (My translation)

[87] The original text: *Masa Lalu Selalu Aktual*, see "Tentang Rumah Tembi", *ibid*.

[88] Nuranto, interview, 2016.

[89] *Ibid.*

[90] *Ibid.*

[91] *Ibid.*

Nuranto knew Yudho of GLAV because they worked together in an audio-visual production house, Shandika Widya Cinema, which produced gossip and entertainment news for commercial TV stations[92]. Nuranto himself had an idea of doing a documentary film festival, and it came when he was studying at Cornell University. Nuranto befriended Joshua Baker, a specialist in Asian studies, and the idea came from conversations with him[93]. As a philanthropist, Nuranto regularly donates money to various cultural activities, and documentary film is among his interests. Nuranto has said the motivation for founding FFD was his interest in seeing Indonesians convey their ideas in a visual manner[94]. Based on this, he believes that audio-visual would be the best medium for exploring how the ideas are delivered and interact with society, rather than text-based media[95]. Nuranto mentions the 1998 political change specifically, identifying it as the impetus for FFD and related to its future goals, as he sees the political change not as a one-off event, but as a process that maintains Indonesia as a democratic country. In this regard, the festival started as a response to the new media environment, while at the same time aiming to provide an avenue for channelling ideas about how the reforms should be manifested in more established ways[96].

Nuranto's contribution to FFD has varied over the years. It has consisted of cash prizes for the competition winner and the use of Tembi as one of the venues for the festival. He mentions particularly that his contribution is around IDR75 million

---

[92] Nugraheni, interview, 2017.

[93] Nuranto, interview, 2016.

[94] *Ibid.*

[95] *Ibid.*

[96] *Ibid.*

(around £4,400) annually, and this amount may reach IDR150 million (£8,800) per year when in-kind contributions such as venues and accommodation for guests are included[97]. The total budget of the festival is around IDR 200 million (around £11,700). Nuranto's contribution has decreased over the years, but the he remains committed to providing the prize money for the winner of the competition section, as he considers this to be the core activity of FFD[98].

FFD started in 2002, when Nuranto provided the funding to kick-off the venture and GLAV mobilised their members and recruited volunteers to create the festival. The membership of GLAV has never been strict, with people coming and going. It is more like a film club in which the attendees are considered to be members[99]. One of the GLAV regulars who was later to become a key person and co-founder of the festival is Dwi Sujati Nugraheni, an activist and NGO employee who was working as a photographer at Yayasan Dian Desa (Village Lantern Foundation), an NGO that specialised in helping farmers and the agricultural economy[100]. Nugraheni joined the first FFD event as a participant after submitting a short documentary she made at work to the competition section[101]. The winner that first year was *Gerabah Plastik* (*Plastic Pottery*), a documentary made by Tonny Trimarsanto, who later became one of the most productive independent documentary filmmakers in Indonesia. Nugraheni remembers that the festival was conducted in three separate venues. The main screening was the student hall, where GLAV usually screened their films, with

---

[97] *Ibid.*

[98] Nuranto, interview, 2016.

[99] Nugraheni, interview, 2017.

[100] *Ibid.*

[101] *Ibid.*

the awards night at Rumah Tembi and other screenings at *Lembaga Indonesia Prancis* (France Cultural Centre in Yogyakarta or LIP)[102].

The first edition of the festival was held for three days in August and Nugraheni, who came to almost all the screenings and discussion while also helping to organise the festival, considered it to be a success since the events were all full[103]. Nugraheni believes Garin Nugroho's attendance at the festival contributed to its success –people wanted to see him because his film, *Daun di Atas Bantal* (*Leaf on a Pillow*), had just been released in the cinema[104]. Nugroho's position as a Yogyakarta-based filmmaker who had made his name at the national level and had his films selected for international film festivals in Europe made his presence a draw for aspiring filmmakers and students in Yogyakarta. The original intention was to have the festival run annually, so Nuranto called the GLAV activists for a meeting after the first event to ask about their commitment for the following year. In this meeting, it was decided that Nugraheni would be the next festival director and she signed a five-year contract with the festival organiser that stated she would work for the festival at least for five years[105].

In the early years of the festival and onward, Jakarta-based festival organisers, film club managers, film activists and foreign cultural centres and embassies were vital in maintaining FFD. These people and communities are part of the 'stakeholders' that enable the festival to start up and then continue over the years. Rather than

---

[102] *Ibid.*

[103] *Ibid.*

[104] *Ibid.*

[105] *Ibid.*

depend on 'festival circuits' to get films, festival speakers and jury members, the stakeholders play much more important role, especially in the community based festivals such as FFD. Nugraheni's account of meeting the stakeholders in Jakarta follows in the next paragraph.

After Nugraheni was appointed festival director she met Lulu Ratna, co-founder of Boemboe Forum, a community-based organisation that had been conducting film screenings and gatherings of filmmakers, specialising in short film[106]. Nugraheni met Ratna at Goethe Institute in Jakarta, along with Lisabona Rahman, a programmer for Kineforum, an alternative screening venue managed by The Jakarta Art Council, Alex Sihar, the co-founder of Konfiden and organiser of Festival Film Pendek (Short Film Festival) and Dian Herdiany of In-Docs[107]. Nugraheni received plenty of advice about programming from the group and they promised to keep in touch and share contacts[108]. This meeting was very important, as this was the ground for FFD's work over the years. From such meetings, FFD has managed to get contact with people and institutions that can help it getting documentaries to be screened in the festival. Since then, FFD has been considered part of the network of film activists and institutions who work to foreground documentary film culture in Indonesia, and they have an important place because of their special interest in documentary film[109].

Another important factor enabling FFD to be run over a long period of time is the link to foreign embassies and foreign cultural centres in Jakarta and Yogyakarta. Some

---

[106] "About Us," Boemboe https://boemboe.org/about accessed 15 February 2018.

[107] *Ibid.*

[108] *Ibid.*

[109] *Ibid.*

cultural centres such as the French cultural centre (CCF/IFI) in Jakarta[110] and LIP in Yogyakarta[111], and the Dutch cultural centre, Erasmus Huis in Jakarta or the Italian cultural centre, IIC[112], in Jakarta, have been doing their own regular film screenings, equipped with small-scale promotions such as websites, social media accounts, limited distribution postcards, and pamphlets. FFD, like other festivals in Indonesia, has been building good relationships with these centres and collaborating with them in obtaining films or sponsoring some international guests to attend the festival[113]. FFD has also benefitted from these foreign cultural centres and embassies, both in obtaining films for the festival and in using the venues for the screenings and talks.

These institutions supported the festival with long-format documentaries such as *Dites a Mes Amis Que Je Suis Mort* (directed by Nino Krtadze, France, supported by CCF Jakarta), *Les Mauvais Garcons* (directed by David Carr-Brown, France, supported by LIP Yogyakarta) and *Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media* (directed by Mark Achbar, Canada, Embassy of Canada) [114]. These types of support have become common practice for FFD, as can be seen from the programme catalogues over the years.

Another important aspect of the festival is the way it promotes networking with domestic organisations, including with other film festivals. An example of this is director Mark Achbar, who came to Indonesia to attend the screening of his film *The*

---

[110] http://www.ifi-id.com/jakarta

[111] http://www.ifi-id.com/yogyakarta#

[112] http://www.iicjakarta.esteri.it/iic_jakarta/it/

[113] Damaihati, interview, 2017.

[114] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program* 2005 (*Programme Catalogue 2005*). (Yogyakarta: Festival Film Dokumenter, 2005), acknowledgement page. (My translation).

Corporation at JIFFest, which took place a few days before the opening of FFD. The programmers at FFD knew Achbar was attending JIFFest and decided to invite him to their own festival. Achbar took up the invitation and visited Yogyakarta[115] to attend the screening of *Manufacturing Consent* and lead a public talk about the film[116].

In the case of FFD, networking with other festivals such as JIFFest in Jakarta and JAFF in Yogyakarta has been an important element of the festival operation, especially in deciding the date of the festival and the programming. All three big festivals are conducted in late November to early December, therefore they need to 'talk to one another' to avoid schedule collisions. More than schedule adjustment, these three festivals, especially FFD and the documentary section of JIFFest, have collaborated with each other in programming[117]. As described in the case of Mark Achbar earlier, FFD sometimes benefits from JIFFest, because international guests are more likely to attend JIFFest, but if they are already planning to attend that festival, they may choose to go to FFD as part of their trip to Indonesia. There has been a sense of hierarchy in relations between FFD and JIFFest, where Jakarta-based JIFFest is seen as being in the higher position and the tension caused by Jakarta's dominance is apparent, as stated by the festival founder, Norbertus Nuranto, "It is also important that the international community knows Yogyakarta. Not everything must go through Jakarta[118]". Therefore, in many cases, FFD has sent its own invitations to renowned filmmakers to attend their festival, such as Australian filmmaker Curtis Levy, who accepted the invitation and came to FFD without going through JIFFest or any Jakarta-

[115] Nuranto, interview, 2016.

[116] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2005*, 14.

[117] Nuranto, interview, 2016.

[118] *Ibid*.

based network[119]. In this case, during my interview with him, Nuranto radiated a sense of pride that this 'small festival' had managed to attract a renowned international filmmaker to participate. This cultural contest between Yogyakarta and Jakarta has inevitably become a factor that has influenced the shape of the documentary film culture that has formed.

This model of collaboration echoes what has been asserted by De Valck about the network that exists between festivals[120]. De Valck points out the importance of seeing each festival as operating within a network of festivals on various different levels. Many decisions made when organising a festival, including its date, programming, and more, are influenced by and must be adjusted on account of other festivals, to avoid their schedules conflicting, for example. However, this relationship to other festivals and institutions in Jakarta has also shown a tension and a sense of competition between the festivals in different cities. Nuranto's expression that "not everything must go through Jakarta" is an assertion of the capability of Yogyakarta to overcome Jakarta as the centre for national cinema culture.

Another explanation of the involvement of other film communities, film activists and foreign embassies, cultural centres and other non-profit organisations in FFD could be derived from Ragan Rhyne's concept of stakeholders in film festivals[121]. Rather than seeing film festivals as embedded organically in a global festival circuit which connotes the economic function of festivals within the film industry, this approach looks at the connection with local and global non-profit sectors of the

---

[119] *Ibid*.

[120] de Valck, *Film Festivals*, 133-4.

[121] Rhyne, "Film Festival Circuits," 135-149.

cultural industry that make a festival happen[122]. This provides a good explanation for a community-based festival such as FFD and the way it has been utilising networks of activists and foreign embassies and cultural centres to obtain films, borrowing screening venues, inviting speakers for public talks, and even to build its audience base. This approach helps us to see how the festival shifts the focus from aesthetic development or economic function of the festival in the global film market to other features of the festival such as the cultural policy aspect, or even the possibility of critical engagement. The next section on programming discusses the latter.

Screening programmes

Programming is the core of the festival and this section elaborates FFD programming with the intention of seeing its potential for critical engagement with the audience and type of publicness that generated from it. This covers the key programmes of the festival to show how documentary film culture is formed in this festival. The concerns related to documentary films are laid out in this section in order to reflect to the 'New Order visual culture' that has been dominating documentary film aesthetics in Indonesia. Then this section is closed with analysis of the screening programme, which manifests a concern with social and political issues, before moving to the non-screening programmes.

It is rather difficult to discuss the programming of a festival that has been conducted for more than a decade in encyclopaedic detail, and therefore this section will highlight the core programming. This consists of the competition section and the

[122] *Ibid*, 135.

off-screen programming, mostly public talks and workshops, and I will examine the type of engagement that takes place during those activities. This discussion of off-screen programming will focus on the 2016 event, in which I participated.

As with many other festivals in post-1998 Indonesia, the general strategy for FFD's programming depends on three main activities of the programmers who are employed by the organisation behind the festival[123]. First, the programmers actively seek information about Indonesian filmmakers' projects, before approaching them to obtain a preview and then persuading them to screen the finished film at the festival[124]. Second, they seek information about international films – mostly online or from international festivals – then approach the relevant embassy before putting together a proposal for a collaboration to bring the films, or even perhaps the filmmakers, to the festival[125]. Third, programmers approach cultural centres and embassies to seek potential films[126]. Cultural centres usually have a list of the latest film releases ready, and the programmer will contact the relevant people for follow up[127].

However, further explanation from FFD programmers exposes a kind of friction that leads to the distinctive characteristics of FFD in comparison with other local festivals, such as Jogja NETPAC Film Festival or JAFF. Negotiation within limited available resources is the keyword in operation of FFD as a community-based festival, and also important for JAFF. When it comes to obtaining films, FFD has to share with

---

[123] Damaihati, interview, 2017.

[124] *Ibid*.

[125] *Ibid*.

[126] *Ibid*.

[127] *Ibid*.

JAFF because they share relatively similar sources to get the films, which are mainly foreign embassies and cultural centres. It is very rarely that a festival such as FFD obtains films from a foreign distributor that proactively approaches it offering films to screen[128]. JAFF is a festival that screens various types of film (fiction, documentaries and experimental), and all of them are recent films, unless for a retrospective section focused on particular directors. In general, JAFF does not pass up the opportunity to screen documentary films that suit its programme. To avoid conflict in programming and selection of films, FFD must negotiate with JAFF. Sometimes this has resulted in FFD selecting "old films" that JAFF would most likely to leave out. For example, in 2014 when FFD approached France Cultural Centre in Yogyakarta, they selected a retrospective of Agnes Varda[129] since they were sure that JAFF would not be interested in old films and had no plan to do Varda's retrospective[130]. In this regard, the network among festivals, particularly other domestic festivals, plays an important role in programming for screening and off-screen events. This shows how the non-profit network becomes the source for and also shapes the development of festival programming.

As for screening events, from what I have gathered from FFD programme catalogues and interviews, the programming mostly attempts to address certain concerns. The first concern is the lack of attention to documentary film in comparison to fiction film, which is believed to be happening because of the marginal position of

---

[128] *Ibid*.

[129] "Retrospective Agnes Varda," FFD 2014, accessed 16 November 2018, https://ffd.or.id/2014/retrospective/ (My translation).

[130] Damaihati, interview, 2017.

documentary film[131]. To answer this, FFD relies on some 'big names' both in filmmakers and documentaries that have been successful at international film festivals or even in major distribution. Similar to other film festivals in general, big names and famous films that have already attracted media attention are expected to gain public attention. FFD programmer Alia Damaihati gave an example with the selection of Joshua Oppenheimer's *The Look of Silence* as an effort to attract audience as Oppenheimer's previous film, *The Act of Killing*, was widely talked about in the media[132]. However, FFD could not rely on big names every year because even famous names in documentary film sometimes mean nothing for the general public[133]. Therefore, concern about aesthetic development of documentary and debates on socio-political issues are quite significant in FFD.

Another significant concern is demonstrating the development of the aesthetics of documentary film, and this is reflected in "*Spektrum*" programme as well as in the competition section. The *Spektrum* programme, which has been part of the festival since 2007[134], is designed to be a showcase for recent developments in documentary films[135], demonstrating how filmmakers "have had the consciousness to marry their ideas with adequate storytelling"[136].

---

[131] Angga Rulianto, "*Penonton minim jadi masalah FFD 2014*" (Lack of audience is FFD 2014's problem) in *Muvila.com*, accessed 5 December 2018, http://www.muvila.com/film/artikel/penonton-minim-jadi-masalah-ffd-2014-141213k.html. (My translation).

[132] *Ibid.*

[133] Damaihati, interview, 2017.

[134] Festival Film Dokumenter. *Buku Progam 2007* (*Programme Catalogue 2007*), (Yogyakarta: Festival Film Dokumenter, 2007), 1. (My translation).

[135] Aryanto. *Festival Film*. 59

[136] Festival Film Dokumenter. *Buku Progam 2015* (*Programme Catalogue 2015*), (Yogyakarta: Festival Film Dokumenter, 2015), 40. (My translation).

In the competition section, FFD has been trying to show "innovative" documentaries made by Indonesian filmmakers[137]. This section has been the core programme of the FFD and it is the main reason for the founding of the festival[138]. This competition section is meant to be the barometer of aesthetics in documentary film in Indonesia, and FFD would achieve this through a jury that must consist of an academic, a filmmaker and a critic[139]. FFD believes that the combination of these three viewpoints allows the judgment to keep to the 'core' of documentary, which is its effectiveness in delivering ideas visually and at the same time maintaining its integrity as a medium based on fact[140]. Until 2016, the competition was meant only for Indonesian documentary film, because FFD was not confident that the festival would attract international filmmakers to submit their films. In general, FFD does not have any problems with films submitted for the competition section. From all the films submitted, the selection committee (FFD calls this committee *juri madya* or intermediary jury) choose the nominees for each category, which are screened and judged by the jury members[141]. In the past, members of the selection committee were chosen by FFD and mostly consisted of activists, scholars and documentary

---

[137] *Ibid,* 5.

[138] Nuranto, interview, 2016.

[139] Based on my experience as jury member of FFD, the combination is always in place, with me representing the position of a critic, rather than an academic, in various different panels in 2009, 2010 and 2016.

[140] Nuranto, interview, 2016.

[141] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2007*, (*Programme Catalogue 2007*) (Yogyakarta: FFD, 2007), 23.

filmmakers[142], but since 2010 FFD has formed a permanent competition team to do the selection, led by Alia Damaihati, an activist who joined FFD in 2006[143].

The development of documentaries in the competition section is observed by film scholar Budi Irawanto who has been on the jury in the festival for several years. In his article published in 2010 and then republished in 2012, Irawanto notes that most of the selected films in the competition section were about "the people at the margin such as disabled persons, mentally ill people, transsexuals, older people, traditional art performances and indigenous communities"[144]. However, the portrayal of these people in Irawanto's note tends to put the marginalised people as 'distant other' and tends to "reproduce the dominant ideology in viewing social problems rather than resisting it or forwarding alternative (oppositional) perspective"[145]. As a conclusion, Irawanto asserts that the documentaries in FFD are still dominated by the narrative style rooted in New Order visual culture[146]. As for this 'New Order visual culture', Irawanto explains:

> …the 'touristic view' (as obvious in some travelogues) and the 'exoticization' tendency (predominant in the colonial era and further developed in New Order documentary aesthetics) has been a norm in documentary filmmaking during the New Order era...[147]

---

[142] *Ibid*.

[143] Damaihati, interview*,* 2017. Before joining FFD, Alia Damaihati was an organiser for a film club called Love/Reactor that conducted screenings in meeting halls, renting 35mm films copy of Indonesian films from producers. The screenings – different to FFD – were commercial ones where the audience pay the admission ticket and then the revenue was shared between the organiser and the producer. Damaihati, interview, 2017.

[144] Irawanto, "Beyond Big Dramatic Moments," 123.

[145] *Ibid*, 119.

[146] *Ibid,* 117.

[147] *Ibid*, 113.

Irawanto seems re-examined this view when judging *Prison and Paradise,* which was the winner in the 2010 event. Irawanto admits *Prison and Paradise* went beyond the 'touristic view' and was able to "reflect the level of intimacy had between the filmmaker with the subjects and the immediacy of the events recorded by the filmmaker[148]". Irawanto also speaks highly of some other recent documentaries in the festival, such as *The Land beneath the Fog* (directed by Shalaluddin Siregar, 2012) and *Rangkasbitung, A Piece of Tale* (a collaborative project between two community groups, Forum Lenteng and Saidjah Forum, 2011).

Returning to the aesthetic concerns of documentary films at FFD, it seems that the development of aesthetics could be placed within a bigger discussion about a bigger picture of the 'New Order visual culture' as posited by Irawanto. These more current documentary titles make Irawanto speculate that the future of documentary aesthetics could provide the possibility of documentaries to go beyond 'the New Order visual culture'. Australian scholar David Hanan also has a similar view in his assessment of Aryo Danusiri's *Lukas' Moment* (2006), a documentary about a young man in Papua who aspires to gain his economic independence[149]. Because these more current documentaries give a voice to the marginalised rather than exoticise them, both Irawanto and Hanan see documentary film in Indonesia as having the potential to break free from New Order aesthetics. Hanan traces this back to Garin Nugroho,

---

[148] *Ibid*, 123.

[149] David Hanan mentioned Danusiri and his *Lukas' Moment* as the pioneer of observational documentary in Indonesia and argued that this development is important in creating the aesthetical rupture in documentary film in Indonesia, especially by representation of the struggle of the Papuan youth, a very marginalised social ethnic group in Indonesia. See David Hanan, "Observational Documentary Comes to Indonesia, Aryo Danusiri's *Lukas' Moment*" in *Southeast Asian Independent Cinema*. (ed.) Tilman Baumgartel (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012), 105-116.

the forerunner of independent documentary film in Indonesia, who has instigated new practices and discourses in documentary film aesthetics, as for example in his examination in *Air and Romi* described in the previous chapter[150].

These views are interesting against the backdrop of FFD as an institution that, along with other film festivals, has shaped the new documentary film culture, especially because the festival has nurtured documentary filmmakers. FFD and other festivals such as JIFFest and JAFF have played an important role in providing an avenue to look at the array of film aesthetics that are in circulation among filmmakers in Indonesia. Institutionally, these festivals have formed and been formed by this new culture, enabling the discussion to go beyond the breaking or continuation of "the New Order visual culture". The subject matters and cinematic strategies that have been developed along with the festival have shown that the so-called "New Order visual culture" is no longer the single determining factor in the aesthetic choices, either as a model or to be rejected. Rather, the festival has provided a platform for circulating ideas and conversations about aesthetics on different levels, especially in the competition section. Nuranto mentions that after the screening of *On Broadway* in FFD, there were many films submitted to the festival with a similar approach – a documentary consisting of single long take[151]. This illustrates that the conversation surrounding aesthetics has gone beyond the shadow of the old regime, and filmmakers are now looking for new points of reference, with film festivals being one of the providers.

---

[150] See chapter 4 on In-Docs.

[151] Nuranto, interview, 2016.

Another concern that is reflected in the screening programme is the concern with socio-political issues in the programme called *Perspektif* (Perspective). *Perspektif* is a series of screenings of international documentaries that is designed to provide a coherent theme[152] related to the current social and political issues that the festival wants to address as the main theme of the festival. For example, the theme for 2013 was "No Bound, No Boundaries", and this was meant to emphasize blurring boundaries because of global interconnectivity[153], and in 2015 the theme was "Re-defining", which was "a call to redefine processes, spaces and identities"[154]. The theme "Re-defining" was broken down into two sub-themes: "Of A Man and Territory" about individuals' struggles to overcome their geographical confinement[155], and "The Present of The Past" which dealt with people's struggles with their difficult pasts as part of their personal biography[156]. These themes are presented in English mainly because FFD considers itself an international film festival, assuming a potential international audience, and so they think it is necessary to have the themes and programme names English[157]. Since 2007 the festival catalogue has been written bilingually in Bahasa Indonesia and English in order to make the festival appear more international[158], although the quality of the English is sometimes poor.

Regardless of these themes, it is hard to tell how the themes are able to engage the audience without looking at the screening and discussion that follow the

---

[152] Aryanto, *Festival Film,* 58

[153] *Ibid*.

[154] Festival Film Dokumenter. *Buku Progam 2015*, 2.

[155] *Ibid*, 28.

[156] *Ibid*, 35.

[157] Damaihati, interview*,* 2017.

[158] *Ibid*.

screening. The next section will discuss the non-screening programmes and offer a detailed account of a post-screening discussion that I attended.

Non-screening programmes

To examine the off-screen activities in FFD is difficult because the festival does not have any documentation of events as it does not have any dedicated staff to do so. I base this section from paper documents and programme catalogues I found during my research and a fieldwork note I produced during a 2016 event. Then it is continued with elaboration of some off-screen activities, especially the post-screening talks and public discussion, in relation to the formation of publicness in the festival. Off-screen activities in the festival, especially the public talks and panel discussions, are considered to be the gestures that produce the space in which publicness may emerge. These post-screening activities can be thought of as the site for production of "less distant" viewing of the problems of others[159].

FFD, like other post-1998 film festivals in Indonesia, gives significant space for public talks and panel discussions on various subjects related to the films that have been screened or about films and filmmaking in general. For FFD this has been true since their very first festival[160]. The discussion basically consists of two models. The first is about documentary film as a distinct subject in Indonesia. This covers topics around documentary film as distinct media format and its place in the larger socio-political context. This model could be seen in table 1 below. The second model is the

[159] Sonia Tascon and Tyson Wils, "Introduction", 5.

[160] Nugraheni, interview, 2017.

NGO talk, where FFD provide a platform for non-government organisations, community activists and other civil society groups to screen their documentaries and talk about their programmes that related to the film.

Table 1[161]

Public talks/ discussions about documentary films at FFD

Year	Topic	Speakers
2005	Documentary film and social reality: art, functions and meaning[162].	Abduh Aziz (filmmaker), Budi Irawanto (film scholar), Zamzam Fauzanafi (film scholar).
	Searching for documentary film aesthetics: tension between reality and manufacture[163].	Seno Gumira Ajidarma (film scholar), Gerzon R. Ayawalia (filmmaker and scholar) and JB Kristanto (film critic and journalist).
2006	Filmmaker in the middle of circumstances: talk about filmmaking in difficult situations such as political crisis[164].	Curtis Levy (filmmaker, Australia) and Lexy Rambadetta (filmmaker).
2007	"Filmmaking in the eye of storm", discussing documentary filmmaking in the middle of political and environmental crisis[165].	Anand Patwardhan (filmmaker) and Danny Lim (filmmaker), moderated by Lexy Rambadeta (filmmaker).
	Guerrilla filmmaking, discussing documentary filmmaking under tight budget[166].	Anand Patwardhan (filmmaker) and Danny Lim (filmmaker), moderated by Lexy Rambadeta (filmmaker).
	Confession: introducing participatory approach in documentary film[167].	Mokh. Sobirin (activist of Kendeng Community), Cecilia

[161] I gathered the data from FFD programme catalogues that are available at FFD office, and the programme book for 2008 edition is not available.

[162] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2005,* 5.

[163] *Ibid*.

[164] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2006,* 14.

[165] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2007,* 30.

[166] *Ibid.*

[167] *Ibid,* 31.

		Maharani (activist fof Kampung Halaman). Moderator: Abduh Aziz (filmmaker, activist).
2008	N/A	N/A
2009	Documentary as (political) media. This discussion will explore more about how video became a weapon in the movements, social campaigns and (the political), or even the shield for advocacy[168].	Aren Zwartjes (filmmaker), Sobirin (activist) and Komunitas Kendeng (activist).
2010	Distribution of documentary film in social networks[169].	Harwan Panuju (activist, filmmaker from X-Code), Hafiz Rancajale (filmmaker), Yerry Nicholas and Nico Warrouw (activist Engage Media).
2011	Indonesian Documentary: Post New Order. This session focuses on the history and development of the documentary in Indonesia in the last 10 years[170].	Budi Irawanto (film scholar), Hafiz Rancajale (filmmaker activist of Forum Lenteng), Katinka van Heeren (researcher and film scholar, Netherlands), Hatib Abdul Khadir (activist EthnoHistory).
	Documentary Practices in Media Development. Nowadays as a result of various fusions with new media platforms, documentary has become a way to prove, imply and deliver edited reality, which obscures the difference between fiction and non-fiction[171].	Dian Herdiany (Kampung Halaman), Nicolaas Warouw (University of Gajah Mada), Eric Sasono (film critic)[172], Ferdi Thajib (Kunci Cultural Studies)
	Checking the power relationship: dilemma in documentary and representation[173].	Aryo Danusiri (filmmaker, activist Ragam), Rahung Nasution (activist, JAVIN), Rhino Ariefiansyah (researcher, PUSKA-UI).

[168] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2009*, (*Programme Catalog 2009*) (Yogyakarta: FFD, 2009). p. 13 – The English text is as printed in the original source. The Indonesian text goes: "Diskusi ini akan mengulas lebih jauh tentang bagaimana video menjadi senjata dalam pergerakan sosial (dan politis) dan kadang menjadi tameng advokasi."

[169] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2010,* 31.

[170] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2011,* 32.

[171] *Ibid.*

[172] In the end, I did not attend the festival because of a technical issue.

[173] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2011,* 32.

		Discussant: M. Zamzam Fauzanafi (Kampung Halaman). Moderator: Antariksa (Kunci Cultural Studies)
	Documentary in Space: Distribution and Restoration. Through social media networking sites, and increasingly diverse and plural forms of work created, allowing the creation of distribution of space in the same medium, but with the method, a different focus or region [*sic*][174].	Andrew Lowenthal (Australia, Engage Media). Pimpaka Thowira (Thailand, Extra Virgin), Suryani Liauw (Indonesian Film Centre)
	Sectarianism in documentary: film, space and violence[175].	Sandeep Ray (Singapore, NUS), Jason Iskandar (filmmaker), Nicholaas Warouw (Indonesia, Gajah Mada University).
2012	Documentary and social memory[176].	Dag Yngvesson (USA, PhD student) and Kartika Pratiwi.
2013	Hybrid documentary. Through this program, FFD wants to present a new discourse in the structural experiment and the documentary method. Hybrid documentary is integrating the principles from different disciplines. This documentary is potentially disrupting the documentary formula which is already established[177].	Yosep Anggi Noen (filmmaker), Ismail Basbeth (filmmaker)
	Interactive documentary: An Introduction. The discussion will focus on how to build audience participation, crossing of media, and the way of storytelling which involves the audience[178].	Ferry E. Sirait (filmmaker), Edwin (filmmaker).
2014	(Re)viewing Indonesian Documentary. To review documentary film in Indonesia, in a discussion on the relation between audience and documentary film, exploring the audience's appreciation of documentary film and the possibilities of	Agni Tirta (filmmaker), Arief Akhmad Yani (filmmaker, activist), Darwin Nugraha (filmmaker).

[174] *Ibid,* 33.

[175] *Ibid,* 33.

[176] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2012,* 36.

[177] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2013*, 48.

[178] *Ibid,* 51.

	the audience engagement beyond the screening[179].	
	Aneka Ria Sinema (Cinema Potpourri). The role of film festival, film distribution and audience[180].	Fujioka Asako (Japan, film producer), Tomioka Kunihiko (Japan, film producer), Fukada Koji (filmmaker), Sakai Takahiro (filmmaker, lecturer), Chalida Uabumrungjit (activist, archivist), Meiske Taurisia (film producer, distributor), Adrian Jonathan (activist, film critic), Sari Mochtan (film producer), Alia Damaihati (festival programmer).
2015	Good Pitch: offers opportunities for documentary filmmakers to collaborate with leading change makers from many disciplines – NGOs, philanthropists, entrepreneurs, corporations, corporations, television network, academicians, policy makers, and social change pioneers interested in using documentaries as instrument that can trigger social changes[181].	Elise McCave
2016	Displacement and stratagem: offers a keen perspective on the land eviction and demolition of community spaces, and analyses strategies on to record them[182].	Adrian Jonathan Pasaribu (film critic).
	Sensing the sensory ethnography: appreciating yet enriching the discourse towards sensory-ethnographic film's form and a sharing experience platform[183].	Eric Sasono (film critic) and Aryo Danusiri (filmmaker, Sensory Ethnography Lab).

[179] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2014,* 52.

[180] *Ibid,* 63. Supported by Arts Council Tokyo, The Japan Foundation Asia Center. The programme is a collaboration of KOLEKTIF (Jakarta-based community film distributor), Documentary Dream Center, Eiganabe (Independent Cinema Guild, Japan).

[181] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2014,* 71.

[182] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2016*, 85.

[183] *Ibid,* 93.

It is pity that there is no recording available for the panel discussions above, nor copies of the presentations[184] given by the speakers. As a result, it is not possible to do a thorough analysis of the talks. After searching for such material, I found only a few papers from the 2011 panel discussion on the topic of: "Checking the power relationship: dilemma in documentary and representation[185]". This does provide insights into the development of documentary culture in that particular year and the type of publicness generated from the talk. The 2011 event was the 10th FFD and the organiser planned it to be a commemorative event reflecting back on the festival and the state of the documentary films that it had promoted over the years[186]. Therefore, as can be seen from the table, there was a greater number of panel discussions in 2011 compared with other years.

The papers presented in that particular discussion included, "Checking the power relationship: dilemma in documentary and representation", by activist Rahung Nasution. In his paper, Nasution writes about his experience in making documentary films on the remote Island of Mentawai. He laments about post-colonial representations that dominate any writings and research about the Mentawai tribe[187]. Nasution's paper explains his strategy for getting the Mentawai people to tell stories about their history by letting them tattoo his body as each tattoo design tells a

---

[184] Many speakers did not provide any paper for the presentation.

[185] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2016,* 32.

[186] I was invited to be the speaker for this edition and I have been given a proper brief about the talking points I have to discuss. My part of the discussion was to talk about the recent development of documentary film in general including the influence from digital platforms on collaborative processes in documentary filmmaking. In the end I did not attend the festival and cancelled my presentation as I did not get permission to leave my work for the trip, besides small misunderstandings about travel planning.

[187] Rahung Nasution, "*Kuasa Pengetahuan*" (Power Knowledge), paper presented at FFD 2011, (Yogyakarta: December 2011), 1. (My translation).

history and belief of Mentawai tribe and then he documented the entire process in a documentary film[188]. He calls his method a "collaborative project", done by working on some tattoos on his body using traditional Mentawai visual motifs[189] and then recording the process to capture the story of the Mentawai tribe and what has happened to the tribe in the name of modernisation[190]. Nasution writes that he self-funded this documentary and he made it out of his personal curiosity[191].

A relatively similar reflection on power relations (and how to overcome the issue during the filmmaking process) was also presented by Rhino Ariefiansyah and Hestu Prahara, anthropologists from the University of Indonesia[192]. Using an example from their experience making a video for a campaign on a plant breeding project done by an NGO, the filmmakers turned the subjects of the documentary into "self-represented beings" by doing a photography and video workshop and letting them make the video themselves[193]. In this paper the authors tell about the negotiation they had to do over time and how they eventually conducted training to enable the farmers to produce their own photography and documentary.

---

[188] Nasution calls himself an obsessed tattoo fan and documentary film activist in the credits of his paper.

[189] The Mentawai tribe is known for its long tradition of tattooing as can be seen in Nasution's documentary, which is available on his YouTube channel: Bongabonga. Mentawai Tattoo Revival: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yuZ2Ari6120, accessed 2nd December 2018.

[190] Nasution, "Kuasa", 5.

[191] *Ibid.*

[192] Rhino Ariefiansyah and Hestu Prahara, "*Kolaborasi dan Refleksivitas dalam Penciptaan Representasi Etnografi Visual dalam Bentuk Video Dokumenter: Sebuah Pengalaman*" *(Collaboration and Reflexivity in the Making of Ethnographic Representation in a Documentary Video: An Experience),* paper presented at FFD 2011, (Yogyakarta: December 2011). (My translation).

[193] *Ibid,* 4-5.

Another panellist, filmmaker and anthropologist Aryo Danusiri, talked about "participatory filmmaking", where filmmakers try to overcome the hierarchy between documentary subject and filmmakers by involving the subjects behind the camera. Danusiri pointed out the danger of this term becoming a new norm after it gained great currency in post-1998 Indonesia.

The other panellist at this discussion was Dian Herdiany, former In-Docs director, who had already established her own organisation, *Kampung Halaman* (Hometown), at that time. She presented a paper with the provocative title "*Film Dokumenter Indonesia: Sudah Merdekakah Kita*?" (Documentary Film: Have we been free?)[194]. The paper pointed out some concerns regarding "*film lokakarya*" or "workshop films", which are films that come about as the result of documentary film workshops conducted by organisations such as In-Docs, Metro TV and her own organisation. The main concern was the tendency for the workshop films to be uniform in style and viewpoint, regardless of the subject matter[195]. Herdiany sees this as a dilemma, since those workshops are needed by filmmakers, especially novice filmmakers who need the expertise and funding provided by the workshops to finish their film. To get out of this dilemma, Herdiany proposes "participatory education" where the filmmakers work together in a collaborative fashion with experts who give guidance[196]. Using participatory methods such as dialogue, long-term process, specific content, shared-ownership of projects and long-term thinking, the workshops would be able to

---

[194] Dian Herdiany. *Film Dokumenter Indonesia: Sudah Merdekakah Kita*? (*Documentary Film: Have We been Free?*). Paper presented at FFD 2011, (Yogyakarta: December 2011). (My translation).

[195] Herdiany, *Film Dokumenter Indonesia,* 2.

[196] *Ibid*, 3.

generate equal positions between the filmmakers, the subjects and the workshop facilitators[197].

From these papers, there are some points relevant to documentary film culture and publicness that I would like to assert. The routes to making documentary films have become less restricted over the course of the festival editions, with opportunities like commissioned projects from NGOs (as in Ariefiansyah's paper), or workshops (as in Herdiany's paper) or self-funding due to affordable equipment (in the case of Nasution). One way or another, documentary filmmaking has become an accessible practice, even for those who have done it out of personal interest or hobby like Nasution with his tattoo. Seeing these practices in comparison to documentary filmmaking in the New Order era, the difference is that now documentary filmmaking has become part of public life, and it can be done without such a barrier to entry or being attached to an organisation or educational institution. The lessening of the state's restriction in filmmaking practices has made filmmakers shift their focus from overcoming the state's obstruction in filmmaking to the awareness of power relations in the filmmaking practices themselves. Filmmakers have become conscious about their own position as the holder of the camera and then try to level their position with the documentary subject. The filmmakers have become aware of their position as knowledge producers (Ariefiansyah), of the institutional model (workshop with funding in Herdiany's case), of post-colonial situations of ethnographic representation (Nasution), or even the danger of complacency of new jargon in defining the best practices (Danusiri), and they have tried to address these issues.

---

[197] *Ibid*, 2-3.

As this panel seems to be aimed at an audience with a special interest in documentary film, it is difficult to imagine that the discussion would appeal to audiences without such a specific interest or even the public in general. It is true that film festivals produce "a public" where subjectivities can be generated through discussion about documentary film[198], but what has been formed in this case is a specific public, revolving around an esoteric idea about documentary filmmaking practices and aesthetics, rather than situating the audience within a wider socio-political context. This panel discussion about FFD was an encounter for an audience that is "ready to testify"[199], where they are ready to be connected to the real socio-political world beyond the screen, In this regard, the 'testimony' is not really formed in the sense of siding to the subjects of the documentary. Rather, it was limited around the main concern of film communities in Indonesia in the transition era, which is to produce space for filmmaking practices and aesthetics rather than arguing for issues outside the filmmaking.

This specific public with a specific interest in documentary film is also exemplified by my own involvement as a public speaker in the 2016 festival, where I co-presented my speech with filmmaker Aryo Danusiri. The topic was sensory ethnography. Originally, FFD proposed the topic "experimental ethnography", but I persuaded them to take the topic "sensory ethnography" instead as Danusiri has been making documentaries using this approach since he joined the Harvard Sensory Ethnography Lab in 2007. The talk was conducted in a meeting hall located in the complex of Taman Budaya Yogyakarta (Yogyakarta Cultural Centre) and Danusiri's 2010 film *On*

---

[198] Cindy Hing-Yuk Wong, *Film Festivals: Culture, People and Screen in the Global Screen* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 2011), 159.

[199] Torchin, "Networked advocacy", 3.

Broadway was screened just prior to provide an example of a sensory ethnography film. The capacity of the meeting room was 80, but there were 120 signed up for the screening on the list at the reception. Waiting outside for the screening to finish, Danusiri and I had a chance to talk to the moderator of the discussion, Franciscus Apriwan, who was also a programmer for the 2016 festival. Apriwan said it is not common to be over capacity for such a screening, especially considering the film had already been screened at FFD in 2010. Apriwan briefed us about the format of the talk: each speaker would give a 5-minute presentation and then there would be a Q&A with questions from the moderator and then the audience.

After the screening, about a half of the audience stayed to listen to the talk. Danusiri started by explaining the filmmaking process. The film was about a congregation of Muslim Friday prayer in a basement in Broadway, New York, located not far from the Ground Zero, recorded in real time with one shot. Danusiri then explained the concept of "unfolding" of time and space in the documentary. I talked about my experience judging this film at FFD in 2010 as a kind of example of the development of documentary aesthetics over the years, which included judging this documentary with other juries. The questions from the audience related to the documentary format and aesthetics. A communication student from a university in Yogyakarta asked a question about the difference between sensory ethnography and observational documentary as both look quite similar to the audience.

Danusiri then gave an explanation about the sensory aspects of filmmaking that should be foregrounded during the shooting and editing, rather than constructing the images to reach the best representation of reality, regardless of format. Therefore, in sensory ethnography, the format could be observational or any other format, so long

as it prioritises the sensory aspects of documentary making. The level of familiarity of the audience with the term "observational documentary" was quite interesting considering long format observational documentary films only appeared in Indonesia with Danusiri's *Lukas' Moment* in the 2006 Jakarta International Film Festival[200]. This shows that documentary film aesthetics are familiar, regardless of the fact that there have been no major media outlets providing substantial space for documentary films, and the format has been introduced to the Indonesian audience relatively recently.

Another question came from Giras Basuwondo, an activist and filmmaker who has been involved in the production of television drama for local and national television. His question was related to the possibility of documentary film aesthetics being a kind of resistance against the aesthetic dominance of fiction film. To this question, I replied that this type of film has limited options for circulation and becoming mainstream because mainstream platforms such as television or major cinema chain do not provide substantial amounts of time for artistic documentaries. However, the circulation of a film like *On Broadway* can be done in forums such as FFD or film clubs, which would be beneficial for video activists and others interested in cinematic forms of their works.

This Q&A session has shown that FFD has created a public that is familiar with documentary film aesthetics and its role in building a particular and distinct cinema culture compared with general film culture. This public is strong in FFD, and it seems that the notion of particular cinematic and artistic expression is important in circumstances where national cinema culture used to be very dominant. However,

[200] Hanan, "Observational documentary", 115.

the panel discussion and my analysis above are not intended to claim that they represent the full extent of publicness at FFD or documentary film culture in Indonesia. I see them as one possibility that emerges from the circumstances, either the immediate circumstances of the panel or the filmmaking institutions in general. FFD has provided the possibility for other kinds of publicness to emerge.

NGO and public discussions at FFD

Similar to In-Docs, FFD operates like a non-government institution, relying on non-profit resources to create its programme. FFD does not even have any direct financial sponsorship for its activities, and collaboration can only be done as in-kind support or tied to special programming, therefore the organisation behind the festival (Forum Film Dokumenter) has no financial dealings with the festival itself[201]. Therefore, rather than seeing FFD as part of the integrated festival circuit that is connected to the global film market, it is better to see it as part of the non-profit economy and private subsidy[202]. FFD could be seen as more at home with the NGO community in Yogyakarta and many of its key personnel come from NGOs. Therefore, NGOs have become one of the main stakeholders of FFD since the very beginning of the festival, and FFD has provided a platform for them to make special presentations.

Such presentations are usually done in a format that consists of a screening, an explanation from the NGO spokesperson and then a Q&A with the audience. The topics and speakers over the years can be seen in the table 2 below.

[201] Nugraheni, interview, 2017.

[202] Ragan Rhyne, "Stakeholder", 135.

Table 2

Public discussion and NGO presentation in FFD Yogyakarta

Year	Speaker	Topic
2006	Institute for Global Justice and Kunci Cultural Studies.	Use proper dosage for globalisation. Discussion on the effect of globalisation in Indonesia[203].
	Yunnan Multi Culture Visual Festival (non-profit organisation from China).	Public presentation.
	Kampung Halaman (non-profit organisation), Ragam (non-profit organisation) and Paulina (non-profit organisation).	Participatory video special session.
2007	Appalshop (US-based video community organisation).	Public presentation[204].
	Mokh. Sobirin (Kendeng Community), Cecilia Maharani (Kampung Halaman). Moderator: Abduh Aziz (filmmaker, activist).	Confession: introducing participatory approach in documentary film[205].
	FFD and Kampung Halaman.	Aku dan Indramayu (Me and Indramayu), screening of several video diaries on youth female marriage in Indramayu, West Java[206].
2009	FFD and Kampung Halaman.	Video Depot, a travelling community video. FFD, Kampung Halaman and Ford Foundation. Digital database of a dynamic video community, can be viewed and copied for distribution as non-profit educational media. Video Depot aims to expand access for community so that the public can know another reality beyond

[203] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2006,* 27.

[204] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2007,* 30.

[205] *Ibid,* 31.

[206] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2009,* 30.

		what is offered by the mainstream media[207].
2010	Harwan Panuju (X-Code), Hafiz Rancajale (Forum Lenteng), Yerry Nicholas dan Nico Warrouw (Engage Media) and Komunitas Dokumenter.	Distribution of documentary film in social networks[208] (video activism).
	Widodo (PLP Kulon Progo/ labour union), Ariyanto (SBMI Blitar/ labour union), Tukirah (migrant worker), Representative of Ahmadiyah (minority group), Rahardja Waluja Jati (Voice of Human Right Media).	Building human rights perspectives in documentary film, making films as campaign media and public education tools on human rights for the general public[209].
	Akumassa Project, Forum Lenteng.	Public presentation: Akumassa Project, Forum Lenteng. Media literacy project and networking local organisations and communities in Indonesia to document what happens in their surroundings[210].
	Yerry Nicholas (Engage Media) and FFD.	Time for Reel Action: presentation of 11 videos on climate change[211].
2011	Sandeep Ray (Singapore, NUS), Jason Iskandar (filmmaker), Nicholaas Warouw (Indonesia, Gajah Mada University).	Sectarianism in documentary: film, space and violence[212]
	Andrew Lowenthal and Terry Nicola Borang.	Engage Media, presenting 4 of their short documentary projects on various topics[213].
	Hafiz Rancajale, Otty Widasari, Andang Kelana.	Forum Lenteng (Lenteng Forum), presenting their long format documentary project, *Dongeng Rangkas*[214].
2013	Kotak Hitam Community.	History and Screen: Montage and memory. This is a program that facilitates a creative space for the youths to do community-

[207] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2009,* 13. The activity is supported by Ford Foundation.

[208] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2010,* 31.

[209] *Ibid,* 32.

[210] *Ibid,* 33.

[211] *Ibid*.

[212] *Ibid*.

[213] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2012,* 34.

[214] *Ibid*.

		based historical research through audio visual medium as part of alternative process in learning history[215].
	Kampung Halaman	SAMA is a program that provides space and opportunity for persons with disabilities to express their problems from their point of view through community-based video (video diary). Through an independent and sustainable creative process, persons with disabilities can express their aspirations for space, opportunity and fair treatment to the public, especially to decision makers[216].
	ITCFB (IT Center for The Blind)	Gadgets Workshop for Persons with Visual Impairment[217]
	Engage Media	"Near horizon: Stories of the Common People" This Human Rights Day, we are giving power back to the people. Through videos made by people on the ground who live the day to day reality in different circumstances, we present to you the voices of the unheard[218].
2014	Eagle Institute Foundation	Eagle Institute Foundation is a part of the effort to collectively answer questions about the functions of documentary film in a broader, open and democratic meaning. This also includes the making and viewing of TV as a strategic part in strengthening public understanding of documentary film[219].
	Amelia Hapsari (filmmaker, festival programmer, InDocs)	Dare to Dream, a project that aims to improve the capacity of Southeast Asian filmmakers and to establish a new platform for funding, distribution and collaboration with existing and new potential stake holders in social justice[220].

[215] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2013,* 66.

[216] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2013,* 68. The workshop is supported by International Labour Organisation (ILO).

[217] *Ibid,* 70.

[218] *Ibid,* 71.

[219] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2014,* 54.

[220] *Ibid,* 69. Dare to Dream is supported by Ford Foundation, in collaboration with STEPS International, DocNet Southeast Asia, Britdoc and Jia Foundation.

	Buttonijo (distribution group)	Viral distribution form, online distribution platform[221].
	M. Zamzam Fauzanafi (activist)	Citizen Gaze is an initial presentation of video, photos and graphics from research on forming citizenship through an anti-corruption campaign facilitated by social media in Banten Province[222].
2015	Elise McCave	Good Pitch: offers opportunities for documentary filmmakers to collaborate with leading change makers from many disciplines – NGOs, philanthropists, entrepreneurs, corporations, corporations, television network, academicians, policy makers, and social change pioneers whom interested in using documentaries as instruments that can trigger social changes[223].
2016	Adrian Jonathan Pasaribu (film critic)	Displacement and stratagem: offers a keen perspective on the land eviction and demolition of community spaces, and analyses strategies on how to best document them[224].
	Kampung Halaman Foundation	What they don't talk about when they talk about girls: talk about misconceptions and perceptions about girls in six cities[225].

These talks and presentations are meant to put the audience's subjectivity into the socio-political surrounding, because the topics go beyond filmic representations and deal more with the NGOs' practices, including their use of audio-visual strategies. Moreover, the screening and discussion enable the medium to contribute, as Lyell Davies asserts, to "how people think or act, ultimately playing a role in shaping the nature of society"[226]. These NGO talks are designed to provide a platform for

[221] *Ibid,* 70.

[222] *Ibid,* 71.

[223] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2014,* 71.

[224] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2016*, 85.

[225] *Ibid,* 87.

[226] Lyell Davies. "Off-Screen Activism", 41.

instigating further engagement with the media beyond the documentary screening, and then to expect the audience to be 'ready' to participate further in the social and political world and fulfil their role in changing the society.

A thorough evaluation of the engagement to these off-screen activities is difficult because there is not much written in the programme catalogues and it is not necessarily possible to find further explanation about the issues. However, these discussions and talks have managed to establish a different type of publicness that revolves around activism and NGOs' activities, even though the public in these NGO presentations are often not part of the festival audience in general[227]. The NGOs that have presented their work at FFD have managed to mobilise their members or supporters to attend the off-screen events and get involved in the talks about the subject matter, but these audience rarely get involved in other screenings. The festival audience in general has also not been involved in the NGO talks, as mostly the topics are not related to their concerns[228]. This is different compared with the audience in the panel discussion about documentary, demonstrating the variety of publicness that might emerge from documentary film festivals such as FFD.

Regarding the NGOs and their public talk, some of the NGOs have been using FFD as a platform to connect their audio-visual programme to the general public, presenting issues they expect to be shared and to enter public dialogue at large. Two Yogyakarta-based organisations, Kampung Halaman and Engage Media, have been given the platform to produce their own public space for the subject matters related to their programmes. For Kampung Halaman, the topics have been changing over the

[227] My resource person asked to be anonymous for this statement.

[228] My resource person asked to be anonymous for this statement.

years from disability issues (2013) to coming of age for girls in Indonesia (2016). Most of their programmes were accompanied by screenings of video diaries made by their subjects as a format of participatory video[229]. Engage Media, an Australian NGO, has also brought its programme Suara Papua (Papuan Voices) an initiative to "enable the people of Papua and Papuan journalists to tell their stories to the world"[230] with a relatively similar format of storytelling.

These NGO discussions are meant to approach documentary film as part of a social and political movement, including discussion on its transformative potential. Most of these organisations use documentary film as part of their campaign strategy and public engagement. However, the audiences of these special programmes have been limited to the people that have already involved with the NGOs in the first place. With the confined festival environment and the screening venues, these special programmes tend to 'talk to the converted' rather than creating new public, or to form a public that ready to 'answer' to socio-political inequalities or injustices at large

Reflecting back on the publicness in these NGO talks and the festival in general, I would like to propose Sonia Tascon's argument on the importance of off-screen activities for providing a space that makes engagement beyond the screen possible. Tascon explores how film watching can turn into "spectating", where the screen brings audience members together in a lived experience that can instigate action beyond the film[231]. Lyell Davies also pays particular attention to these off-screen

---

[229] Festival Film Dokumenter, *Buku Program 2016*, 84.

[230] "Papuan Voices," Engage Media, accessed on 15 December 2018, http://www.engagemedia.org/Projects/papuanvoices.

[231] Sonia Tascon, "Watching Other's Troubles: Revisiting "The Film Act" and Spectatorship in Activist Film Festival" in *Activist Film Festival: Towards A Political Subject* (eds.) Sonia Tascon and Tyson Wils (Bristol: Intellect, 2017), 31.

activities, viewing them as an opportunity for knowledge production that facilitates the 'formation of a public where people discuss social and cultural ideas through the cinema as medium'[232]. This is also in line with the original format of the festival, which was started as a film screening club where films were always accompanied by discussion, and this format has mostly been maintained throughout the festival[233].

The off-screen activities were managed to form a public 'ready to respond' to the film's narrative, especially as the theme brought by the films and the events are varied, but sometimes without really putting the audience into questioning the socio-political world directly. In the public talks about documentary film, the festival has their own agenda to promote documentary film culture, and to create audiences that are ready to consume documentary film as part of their leisure time. This should be understood under the situation of the lack of documentary film infrastructure, where no mainstream broadcaster airs long-format or artistic documentary nor do cinema chains screen documentary films on regular basis. Therefore, providing the audience with such a format has already been a departure from media practices of the previous regime. In this type of discussion, the social and political world has also been discussed, but mostly the attention falls on the production and the aesthetics of documentary rather than forming a sphere for offering opinion on social and political matters. Strategies behind the production and the use of aesthetics to connect to the audience become the main subjects of public discourse during the off-screen activities, rather than attempts to use those as part of social and political engagement.

---

[232] Lyell Davies, "Off-screen Activism" 47.

[233] Nugraheni, interview, 2017.

However, in the discussions that involve NGOs as speakers, the NGO talks have managed to produce a platform for the 'formation of a public where people discuss social and cultural ideas through the cinema as medium', where social and political engagements have emerged. The idea to provide a platform for NGOs to present their projects has produced a metaphorical space where the audience are able to connect directly with certain discourses beyond the screen centred on issues and organisations that carry them to reflect on the dynamics of society at large. The issues that have been foregrounded have enabled the off-screen activities in the festival to put the audience into certain moral dilemmas and make them more likely to engage with and then respond to those issues, with the hope that they would side with the filmmaker's or the NGO's cause. This situation reflects back to what is called the 'testimonial encounter' by Torchin, regardless of the small numbers of the attendees and the audience's position prior to the event. Therefore, besides the screenings, FFD has managed to provide a space for the formation of a public that is engaged through its off-screen activities.

Conclusion

The existence of Festival Film Dokumenter (FFD) Yogyakarta has already marked a pivotal change in documentary culture as it treats documentary as a distinct genre of cinema worthy of celebration in its own right. Based on a combination of people's love for the factual format, activism and patronage, FFD has managed to thrive for more than a decade. The festival has become part of the city agenda, and it has asserted its own importance in establishing the ground for counter-discourse against the domination of a national model of cinema culture that was imposed by

the New Order regime in Indonesia. The notion of being a regional hub for documentary film festival has been tested out in the festival, to provide a counter narrative to the idea that cinema culture must be centred in or originated from Jakarta.

Through programming that tries to capture the dynamics of the socio-political world and by creating presentable aesthetics of Indonesian documentary, FFD utilises the global, domestic and local institutions in its cultural network, or its stakeholders, to support its existence and build its public. Frictions in this process have shaped the direction in which the festival has developed. Therefore, the documentary culture that has grown up alongside the development of institutional formats and aesthetics has also been shaped by this.

The spatio-temporal specificity and the heightened public discourse related to films and their subject matters during the festival have caused many scholars to argue that film festivals bear resemblance to a public sphere or counterpublic. In this thesis I have shown that FFD as a festival has managed to provide a particular domain or space, both physical and metaphorical, to enable the formation of a counterpublic to the domination of the 'New Order visual culture' regardless of lack of prior infrastructure in documentary film circulation. The festival stakeholders in this regard have been shown to be important in the formation of that counterpublic and at the same time asserting the non-commercial nature of the festival and its place as an alternative media practice providing experiences different than being the subject of propaganda. These alternative media practices are in line with Negt and Kluge and also Fraser's ideas about the counterpublic against the totality of the dominant public sphere. Thess alternative media and their publics have formed competing publics

which, according to Fraser, provide better chances for contestation among plurality rather than a single and overarching public[234].

The engagements that have been produced in the festival were done through the screenings of documentary films, especially off-screen activities. As described above, the film narratives and the off-screen activities have already become a new cinema culture different than the New Order visual culture and the mainstream public sphere. The screenings provide platforms for certain discourses to become public, questioning the audience's position on the issues and at the same time enabling them to imagine a world that is different than their immediate surroundings. This is where the medium and its spatial circulatory aspect, as Hansen believes, have transformative roles in the formation of new social horizons. The screenings and festival themes do not necessarily politicise the audience, but they enable documentary films to have "to some extent absorbed the functions of the utopian imagination, albeit in a diminished alienated and depoliticized form"[235].

The off-screen activities have also played significant roles in the formation of a public 'ready to respond' to certain social and political issues brought by the documentary and the organisations that produced them. The narratives and the off-screen activities play the role of the first person who gives testimony that brings moral questions to the audiences. This does not necessarily end with taking the side of the testimony providers, but a 'testimonial encounter' has been produced in the physical and metaphorical space of the festival. In contrast to the production of 'celebrity culture' and nation-wide propaganda of developmentalism in the film

[234] Fraser, "Rethinking", 123.
[235] Hansen, *Babel and Babylon,* 112.

festival of the New Order era, FFD has provided a totally different culture and publicness that enable the audience to become political subjects.

Chapter 6

Watchdoc Documentary Maker: Documentary film and social movements

This chapter discusses another type of publicness that has emerged from Indonesian documentary culture and is relatively different from the two organisations previously discussed. The documentary culture in question developed from a TV journalism background, with an organisation run as a commercial entity. The case study is Watchdoc Documentary Maker, a production house established to serve the audio-visual market that followed the development of commercial TV stations in Indonesia. Watchdoc produces documentaries and current affairs programmes based on commissions from broadcasters or other commercial clients.

Many studies have asserted the possibility of the emergence of publicness from commercial entities in Indonesia. One such study by Edwin Jurriens studied publicness and the culture of dialogue in commercial radio stations in Indonesia[1]. However, as will be discussed in this chapter, the publicness generated by those commercial broadcasters is different to that of Watchdoc in two ways. First, as I found out in my research, Watchdoc is a community-based organisation that has taken the format of a private company to assert its independence and impartiality from short-term political interests. To do this, Watchdoc has become a hybrid organisation: a mix of media organisation, community-based social movement, and private company. Second, public perception of Watchdoc is that it operates like an NGO, and it has been treated

[1] Jurriens, *From Monologue*, 25-45.

as such. This has enabled the organisation to build its position through public campaigns for its various causes, which have also been reflected in the subject matter of documentaries it has produced. The characteristics of its activities and the background of key people in the organisation have helped to made Watchdoc acceptable among NGOs, trade unions, and student associations. Thus, it is identified with activism and social movements in post-1998 Indonesia.

This chapter begins with a discussion about the history of Watchdoc in the context of the audio-visual market in Indonesia. First, changes in the media scene in post-1998 Indonesia (especially television) that affect documentary film institutions —including production houses specialised in documentary film—are discussed throughout. Second, the relationship between Watchdoc and both civil society and social movements in Indonesia is examined. I highlight the characteristic of publicness, with regard to institutional relations between a media organisation specialising in documentary filmmaking and other non-government actors. This is considered within the context of the emergence of publicness, and the debate about the role of the public in Indonesia. Third, an open-air screening event produced by Watchdoc is examined, to investigate the level of engagement that emerged from the documentary narrative and the way it circulates ideas, and its relation to publicness. Finally, the chapter considers the circulation of a Watchdoc documentary film and its subject matter outside Indonesia to provide insight on documentary film culture and the presentation and imagination of Indonesia as a nation.

TV documentary in a transitional period

As discussed in the chapter on In-Docs, during the 1980s various government agencies began to commission filmmakers to make documentary films that were to be aired on the state-owned television network, TVRI. The audio-visual market had started to develop in the late 1980s, coinciding with the beginning of commercial television. This business became an important avenue for many filmmakers, at a time when the production of fiction films was decreasing to its lowest point in the mid-1990s[2]. At the beginning of its development, the audio-visual business was basically dominated by two models. The first was the supply of TV soap operas (*sinema elektronik* or *sinetron* in Indonesian), which was mostly occupied by former film producers who moved their business into television. This was exemplified by Multivision and Starvision—a production house owned by film producer and distributor Chand Parvez Servia[3]. This type of production house later returned to film production when the market for fiction films was revived.

The second type was production houses for current affairs, actuality programmes, and other non-news programmes, which were mostly established and run by former journalists. Included in this category was Norbertus Nuranto, the co-founder of FFD who established and ran his own production house to supply Jakarta-based commercial television[4]. Later, many former television journalists established their

---

[2] Barker, *A Cultural Economy*, 72.

[3] "Chand Parvez Servia – President Director", Starvision. Accessed 18 December 2018, http://www.klikstarvision.com/page/about. (My translation).

[4] See chapter on FFD.

own production houses to supply the stations they had previously worked for. Watchdoc could be categorised within this model.

Watchdoc was established by former TV journalists Dhandy Dwi Laksono and Andy Panca Kurniawan in 2009, in Bekasi, a satellite city east of the capital, Jakarta. They did not really enter cinema culture (in terms of being involved with the film community in Indonesia) until their documentary, *Yang Ketu7uh* (*The Seventh One*, directed by Dandhy Dwi Laksono and Hellena Yoranita Souisa, 2014) was screened by a major cinema chain in Jakarta. The documentary, about the presidential election of 2014, did not gain commercial success as it was watched by fewer than 1,000 people across 5 cinema halls, in Jakarta (3 halls), Yogyakarta (1 hall), and Solo (1 hall) within one week of its release[5]. However, the importance of this documentary lies in the fact that it achieved major cinema distribution, which only six Indonesian documentary films (five long format, and one short format) had achieved since 1998[6]. This major release shone a light on Watchdoc, offering another significant arena within which documentary film culture could thrive in Indonesia.

The people behind Watchdoc come from a television journalism background. To understand television in Indonesia, I begin with a discussion on the general situation during the New Order era, in which Indonesian broadcasting was monopolised by TVRI, the state-owned TV station. Established in 1962 as part of the project to host the Asian Games that year, TVRI ran as a semi-independent non-profit entity

---

[5] Hellena Yoranita Souisa, interview with the author, 19 December 2017.

[6] Kompas.com, "'*Yang Ketu7uh' Film Dokumenter Ketujuh tentang Presiden Ketujuh*" (The seventh One, the Seventh Documentary Film about the Seventh President"). In *Kompas.com*, 15 September 2014, accessed 24 December 2017 http://entertainment.kompas.com/read/2014/09/15/220437010/.Yang.Ketu7uh.Film.Dokumenter.Ketujuh.tentang.Presiden.Ketujuh. (My translation).

(*Yayasan TVRI* or TVRI Foundation), but tightly controlled by the state[7]. The budget come from combination of broadcast license fee, advertisement[8] and the state. Programmes were made in-house, there was no audio-visual market at that time, and public access to TVRI management and programming was non-existent.

It is argued by Kitley that during the New Order regime (1966–1998), TVRI was devised to build a unified 'national culture' for Indonesians[9]. This should be seen in the context of a country with around 300 ethnic groups and 600 languages. It was because of the launch of Indonesia's own satellite in 1976—the Palapa satellite—that TVRI broadcasts could reach the entire country[10]. The launch of the Palapa satellite and the nation-wide broadcasts that ensued are considered an active way for the New Order state to unify the national culture under the control of Jakarta[11]. Sen and Hill argued that the name Palapa— the oath taken by a famous hero of Majapahit, an old kingdom in Java—symbolises a concentrated effort to centralise the portrayal of culture in the hands of the government in Jakarta, whilst at the same time subduing other cultures as part of that centralised version of national culture, rather than allowing an organic portrayal of Indonesia as a multicultural and multi-ethnic country[12]. The situation during the early days of TVRI, especially until the early 1980s, is described by Kitley in relation to public participation:

---

[7] Philip Kitley, "Civil Society in Charge? Television and Public Sphere in Indonesia After Reformasi" in *Television, Regulation and Civil Society in Asia* (ed.) Philip Kitley (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 97.

[8] Kitley, "Civil society", 98.

[9] Philip Kitley, *Television, Nation and Culture in Indonesia* (Athens: Ohio University Central for International Studies, 2000), 3-4.

[10] Sen and Hill, *Media, Culture*, 110-111.

[11] Sen and Hill, *Media, Culture*, 111.

[12] *Ibid*.

> State ideology and executive regulations effectively withdrew television from the public sphere and offered very limited institutional space for civil society to influence the content and activities of the national television service, despite the fact that many Indonesians saw TVRI as 'their television' because of the broadcast licence fees they were obliged to pay[13].

The transition to a more centralised depiction of national culture occurred in 1981, when the then President Soeharto decided to stop the advertisements, and TVRI's revenue dropped significantly[14]. This situation led to TVRI seeking alternative funding, with government agencies offering them 'sponsored programmes', where any government agency could request that TVRI air their programme in return for a fee[15]. After that, TVRI has been dominated by programmes about the role of government agencies in national development[16]. The main supply for this type of programme was the TVRI in-house production unit, but later various government agencies turned to professionals outside the TV station. These were commissioned to make current affairs and documentary programmes about their national development role, and this is where the role of filmmakers from the Jakarta Art Institute enters the scene[17]. Documentary programmes were made mostly to promote development success stories (including the *Gelora Indonesia* series[18]) and part of the programming depicted Indonesian people of certain ethnic groups as distant others[19]. The dominance of TVRI in Indonesian broadcasting went unchallenged until the privatisation of TV stations in the early 1990s.

---

[13] Kitley, "Civil society", 101.

[14] Sen and Hill, *Media, Culture,* 114.

[15] *Ibid*.

[16] Armando, *Televisi Indonesia*, 102.

[17] See chapter 4 on In-Docs.

[18] *Ibid*.

[19] Irawanto, "Beyond Big Dramatic Moments, 113.

Privatisation of television in Indonesia occurred due to the pressure of TV channels from Malaysia and Singapore[20]. Despite the back-up from the Palapa satellite, the coverage of the TVRI was somewhat limited, especially in the border areas, and programming could not really compete with TV stations from Malaysia and Singapore[21]. Further, private TV stations were expected to fill the programming gap that TVRI could not fill, especially in entertainment programmes. The first private TV station, RCTI (established in 1989), first aired on a pay channel, but then moved into the free-to-air scheme in 1990 with the aim of broadcasting to compete against foreign television channels, to maintain the notion of cultural unity[22].

In this context, the government Department of Information put strict controls on TV stations by limiting their news and current affairs programmes. Between 1990 and 1995, five TV licenses were issued to allow private TV stations to broadcast free-to-air. However, the process was far from being a liberalisation of the public sphere, as the licenses were awarded without public tender to family or cronies of the then President Soeharto[23]. Moreover, news programming was also incapable of contributing to public debate as they were required to relay TVRI news bulletins—dominated by ceremonial news of public officials inaugurating development projects. Beyond that, they could only produce 'soft news' with a human interest approach[24].

Later, in the second half of the 1990s, news channels were slowly allowed to produce and air their own news programmes. Nevertheless, Kitley is rather

---

[20] Kitley, *Television, Nation and Culture*, 89-91.

[21] Armando, *Televisi Indonesia,* 153.

[22] Kitley, *Television, Nation and Culture,* 90.

[23] Sen and Hill, *Media, Culture,* 110.

[24] Kitley, *Television, Nation and Culture,* 250-5.

pessimistic about their role in generating a critical public sphere, because they were driven by profit-seeking motives. In Kitley words:

> Far from positioning themselves in the market as credible, constructive channels of public debate, the new channels chose instead to create a pseudo-public sphere of culture consumption. Talk shows, business dialogues and political panel discussions have the appearance of rational, critical debate, but are better understood as the commercialisation of the private sphere.[25]

In this context I would like to highlight a documentary series produced and aired on all private TV stations, to illustrate how the idea of national culture was maintained by the New Order during the mid-1990s. The programme, called *Anak Seribu Pulau* (*The Children of A Thousand Islands*), was produced by Mira Lesmana and Garin Nugroho[26], who later became the most famous film producer and director in Indonesia. Lesmana, with her production house Miles Films, has produced many films such as *Petualangan Sherina* (*Sherina's Adventure*, directed by Riri Riza, 2000), *Ada Apa dengan Cinta* (*What's Up with Love?*, directed by Rudi Soedjarwo, 2002) and *Laskar Pelangi* (*The Rainbow Troops*, directed by Riri Riza, 2008). These films have achieved record ticket sales[27], whilst Garin Nugroho, as mentioned in the previous chapter, has won more international accolades than any other Indonesian filmmaker in the history of Indonesian cinema[28].

The *Anak Seribu Pulau series* aired in 1996, and consisted of 13 episodes each of 24 minutes, each directed by a different director (including prominent names such as

---

[25] Kitley, "Civil society", 104.

[26] "Anak Seribu Pulau" (Children of Thousand Islands), Miles Films, accessed 13 December 2017, https://milesfilms.net/anak-seribu-pulau/. (My translation).

[27] "Mira Lesmana," Miles Films, accessed 11 January 2018, http://milesfilms.net/en/about/miralesmana/.

[28] See Garin Nugoho's page at IMDB: "Garin Nugroho" IMDB.com, accessed 11 January 2018, http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0637838/awards?ref_=nm_awd.

Nugroho, Riri Riza, Enison Sinaro, and Nan Achnas)[29]. The series focused on the daily life of children from various ethnic groups in Indonesia, depicted in a romanticised manner[30]. The innocence of the children is emphasised with scenic backdrops of their surroundings (mostly in non-urban settings), accompanied by a traditional music score, whilst they perform their daily activities[31]. The popularity of this series led to a list of similar documentaries, such as *Anganku* (*My Dream*) and *Bocah Petualang* (*Adventurous Children*), which received many awards from government institutions[32], focusing on children in non-urban settings depicted in a romanticised fashion.

Anak Seribu Pulau was endorsed by the Department of Information, because its depiction was regarded as valuable pedagogical material for children to understand the diversity of Indonesia's population. Moreover, the representation of cultures as a series of 'tales' (*cerita*) was suited the depiction of a restrained version of Indonesian ethnic diversity. This served to undermine the political tension behind the promotion (through domination) of ethnic tradition as part of national culture[33]. This reiterates the notion of the documentary programme as self-exoticisation through a touristic

---

[29] "Anak Seribu Pulau"

[30] Farli Sukanto. "Salam dari Anak Seribu Pulau!" (Greetings from the Children of Thousand Islands!") in *Asengblog*. 8 June 2013, accessed 12 January 2018 http://asengsblog.blogspot.co.uk/2013/06/salam-dari-anak-seribu-pulau.html accessed 14 December 2017. (My translation).

[31] "Anak Seribu Pulau: Kisah Anak-anak Indonesia" (Children of Thousand Islands: Tales of Indonesian Children), Worldcat.org, accessed 14 December 2017, http://www.worldcat.org/title/anak-seribu-pulau-kisah-anak-anak-indonesia/oclc/275174972.

[32] Mohamad Wildan, "TRANS 7: Program Acara Bocah Petualang" (TRANS7: Programme Adventurous Kids). In *Indonesiana, Platform Kebudayaan,* accessed 17 November 2017, https://kebudayaan.kemdikbud.go.id/ditwdb/2016/10/08/trans-7-program-acara-bocah-petualang/ (My translation),

[33] Karen Strassler, "Stories of Culture: Difference, Nation and Childhood in 'Children of a Thousand Islands,' an Indonesian Television Series," *Sights—Visual Anthropology Forum 2006* (1996), http://cc.joensuu.fi/sights/karens.htm

gaze towards what was perceived as unified 'Indonesian culture' (discussed in the previous chapter)[34]. Thus, it is this idyllic depiction of ethnic groups as something fixed and distant that has promoted a false sense of multiculturalism[35].

The anthropologist Gareth Barkin has studied this type of touristic view of particular ethnic groups presented on Indonesian television. For Barkin, the way the audience is encouraged to see these 'traditional' cultures is similar to the way the same cultures are presented for the Western spectator. Through programming such as *Anak Seribu Pulau*, the audience are posited as foreigners to 'traditional' culture by exoticising and sensationalising the common practices of these children. Barkin refers to this as 'foreigning'[36]. In Barkin's words:

> These 'foreign' aspects of culture, in turn, were represented romantically, as moderately interesting and certainly exotic, but ultimately not to be taken seriously beyond a context of cultural consumption.[37] … Most importantly, however, the sense of the exotic is relied on as a central reason why audiences might consider a location or 'culture' interesting and worth visiting. Without this sense, the programs would have little ground on which to make their case to viewers, which particularly when focusing on developing countries is built around the excitement and adventure of foreign travel.[38]

The portrayal of depoliticised multiculturalism should be understood in the context of a centralised representation of culture in the New Order regime. Until the late 1980s, the portrayal of children in TV programmes was dominated by a portrayal

---

[34] See chapter on In-Docs.

[35] Ugoran Prasad and Intan Paramaditha, "Performing Multicultural Space in Opera Jawa: The Tension between National and Transnational Stages", in *Asian Cinema and the Use of Space: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (eds.) Lilian Chee and Edna Lim (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 156.

[36] Gareth Barkin, "The Foreigning Gaze: Producers, Audiences and Symbols of the 'Traditional'". In *Asian Journal of Communication*, 16, No.4 (December 2006): 352-370.

[37] Barkin, "The Foreigning Gaze", 356.

[38] Barkin, "The Foreigning Gaze", 362.

of 'idealised homogenous identity' for children in the *Si Unyil* puppet show[39]. This series has shown the limit of the type of political documentary that could be produced and screened on mainstream channels in Indonesia during that time. In other words, publicness and public appeal is possible but with strong limits on any problematising the national culture.

This model has become an archetype in Indonesian television documentary programmes. This archetype is criticised by the activist and documentary filmmaker Hafiz Rancajale as an evocation of the European coloniser's view of Indonesia as a beautiful country[40]. In post-1998 Indonesia, Rancajale has noted a significant shift in the portrayal of this European view, from beautiful country into 'objectification of the documentary subject', as 'victim and poverty' becomes the main staple of documentary presentation[41]. Rancajale calls for sensitivity in image production and experimentation to avoid further exoticising[42].

The debate presented here offers an insight into the documentary film narrative within Indonesia during the transition era and beyond. The TV documentary, as a special type of programme, was derived from self-exoticisation and a tamed portrayal of Indonesia as a nation, sometimes imbued with the depiction of innocent children as the main subject. This characteristic is an important issue for discussion in relation to an imagining of Indonesia as a nation within and beyond its

---

[39] Satria Wibawa, "The Children of a Nation: The Representation of Children in Garin Nugroho's films", in *Asian Hot Shots: Indonesia* (eds.) Yvonne Michalik and Laura Coppens (Marburg: Schuren, 2009), 119.

[40] Hafiz Rancajale, "Filem Dokumenter Pasca Reformasi: Sebuah Kritik (Post-reformasi Documentary Film: A Critic). Paper presented at FFD 2011: Yogyakarta, (December 2011), 5. (My Translation).

[41] Rancajale, "Filem Dokumenter", 5.

[42] Rancajale, "Filem Dokumenter", 7.

own borders, pertinent to aspects of documentary film culture and publicness that I examine later in this chapter.

As already mentioned, commercial TV stations started reporting their news as 'soft news' stories filled with 'human interest' themes. In the early years of news and current affairs programming in commercial stations, the space for debate was open for family and socially oriented issues such as public housing, environmental pollution, and food contamination[43]. However, this gradually changed, as they began to provide news for the middle class, especially in urban settings. Thus, TV news and current affairs programming became more akin to their print counterparts in Indonesia discussing politics, including the need for reform across the entire system. This has resulted in an incremental shift to discussion about what had been a taboo topic in Indonesia during the New Order era: political succession[44]. For some, it has been suggested that through news and current affairs programmes, commercial TV stations have contributed to the emerging civil society in Indonesia, especially during the transitional period of 1998 to 2000[45].

Between 2000 and 2002, the government opened the air for more commercial TV stations, resulting in the establishment of five additional stations, and, as a result, growth in news and current affairs programmes. Short documentary programmes also began to thrive. This provided the background for one of Watchdoc's co-

---

[43] Kitley, "Civil Society". 104.

[44] Dandhy Laksono, interview with the author, 16 August 2017.

[45] Ed Hollander, Leen d'Haenens and Jo Bardoel. "Television Performance in Indonesia: Steering between Civil Society, State and Market", *Asian Journal of Communication,* 19, no.1 (2009): 41.

founders, Dandhy Laksono, who developed his principal skills in audio-visual journalism within this environment[46].

At one point in his career as a TV journalist, Laksono managed the investigative journalism desk at RCTI, producing short documentary programmes (or TV features) to accompany the daily newscast. From 2007 to 2008 he produced a series of three-minute documentary programmes about Munir Said Thalib, a renowned Indonesian human rights lawyer who was assassinated on a flight from Jakarta to Amsterdam whilst on the way to study for a master's degree at Utrecht, in The Netherlands. The short programme was meant to influence public opinion on the court process by showing evidence and court processes that had been ignored by other media[47]. This documentary caused some upset, with an army general calling the deputy editor-in-chief of RCTI, Atmaji Sumarkijo, requesting the programme be stopped[48]. Sumarkijo refused, emphasising that unlike during the New Order era, it was not possible to just halt any news coverage considered unsuitable by telephoning the editor-in-chief[49]. Instead, the general threatened to 'just call the Chinese [owner to stop it)'[50]. The latter's intervention led to an order for the programme to be halted, although this only occurred on the same day that the programme actually finished.

This fragment offers an important insight into the role of documentary programmes and television in Indonesia, in the context of the growing documentary

---

[46] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[47] *Ibid.*

[48] *Ibid.*

[49] *Ibid.*

[50] "S*aya telepon Cina-nya aja deh!*" As mentioned by Dandhy Laksono. Laksono, interview, 2017

culture. First, political intervention through telephone calls (usually called '*budaya telepon*' or telephone culture)[51]—where government officials call the chief editor of a media organisation to stop news being printed or circulated—remains an issue within the media industry. This was known to happen to print journalists during the New Order era, and somehow it remained among government officials during the transition period. This telephone culture has since decreased, to the point where (in the case just provided) the newsroom head was able to disobey the order by arguing that such a culture belongs to the past, emphasising that the authoritarian regime has gone.

Second, the pressure of the owner has reflected a more complicated situation, whereby the position of Chinese businesspeople in the television industry in Indonesia (and their political connections)[52] brings new influences other than just political forces outside media organisations. The entanglement of media and politics in Indonesia has reached a level where many researchers have decried the media oligarchy[53]. Not only is the media owned and controlled by a few business moguls, but these owners (who are sometimes the founders of political parties), politicians, and public officials have normalised the use of the media as a channel for their political interests[54]. Challenges to this notion have been made by quasi-governmental institutions, such as the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission or the Press Council,

---

[51] Leen d'Haenens, Effendi Ghazali and Chantal Verelst, "Indonesian Television News-Making Before and After Suharto", in *Gazette*, 61, No. 2 (1999): 130.

[52] Kitley, *Television, Nation and Culture,* 230-31.

[53] See Ross Tapsell, *Media Power in Indonesia: Oligarch, Citizens and the Digital Revolution* (London and New York: Rowman and Littlefield).

[54] Tapsell explores this thoroughly in his book. See Tapsell. *Media and Power*. xv.

but with almost no capacity to impose sanctions. Watchdoc was created within this culture, which has influenced how the organisation has operated over time.

The idea of establishing Watchdoc emerged when Laksono was researching the programme about the assassination of Munir. He met Andy Panca Kurniawan, whom he had known from many previous occasions. Kurniawan was working as a campaigner for the organisation founded by Munir[55]. Laksono was known as a TV journalist with many issues against the establishment, including a legal suit against his own media company. In 2004, he was involved in a dispute against the TV station he worked for (SCTV), when his work on the state of emergency in Aceh Province was rejected by his editor[56]. He protested and was discharged by the TV station. Laksono then brought the case to court, demanding compensation. The case was adjudicated in both the industrial and civil courts, as it was considered both an industrial relations and a freedom of expression case. The civil court rejected the case[57], and the industrial relations dispute was resolved in an out-of-court settlement[58]. It has been mentioned by a commentator that this case identified a problem related to

---

[55] Laksono, interview, 2007.

[56] Hukumonline.com, "*Gugatan Dandhy ke SCTV Ditolak Pengadilan*" (Dandhy's lawsuit against SCTV was rejected by the court), *Hukum Online*, 2 April 2004, accessed on 14th December 2017, http://www.hukumonline.com/berita/baca/hol10042/gugatan-dandhy-ke-sctv-ditolak-pengadilan. (My translation).

[57] *Ibid.*

[58] Detik.com, "*SCTV dan Eks Produser Akhirnya Damai, Siap Rehab Nama Baik*" (SCTV and former producer finally settled, ready for name rehabilitation), *Detik.com*, 8 December 2005, accessed on 14th December 2017, https://news.detik.com/berita/d-494694/sctv--eks-produser-akhirnya-damai-siap-rehab-nama-baik. (My translation),

democracy in Indonesia, in which the TV station has conducted its own self-censorship for a politically sensitive topic[59].

While Laksono is known as a hard-hitting journalist, Kurniawan is known as an activist-journalist who has worked in various non-government organisations. Kurniawan also worked as a journalist. He was the editor-in-chief of The Voice of Human Rights (a news agency that produces news on human rights issues), and *Saluran Informasi Akar Rumput* (Grassroots Information Channel or SIAR), a news channel produced by and for its community media members. He was also co-founder of *Bakubae*, a community media initiative to promote peace-building initiatives in the post-conflict province of Maluku[60]. Looking at this background (notably different to In-Docs and FFD, which were established and organically grown in and directly connected to the film community), Watchdoc is more at home with journalists and NGO communities[61].

Rather than following Garin Nugroho in building an NGO to obtain funding from the third sector, such as NGOs and philanthropic organisations, Laksono and Kurniawan are trying to emulate the success of a production house called PT Samuan Rumah Kreasi (otherwise known as Studio Samuan) established by the former TV presenter and journalist, Tjandra Wibowo[62]. Wibowo began her career producing a

---

[59] Ade Armando, "*Dandhy Dwi Laksono, Aceh dan SCTV*" (Dandhy Dwi Laksono, Aceh and SCTV) in *Ade Armando*, 21 June 2003, accessed on 14th December 2017, http://adearmando.com/?p=276. (My translation).

[60] NUS, "Film Screening Kala Benoa" in National University of Singapore, accessed on 10th December 2018, https://ari.nus.edu.sg/Event/Detail/b13dd730-86b8-46f5-a1e0-78231909ab19. (My translation).

[61] Souisa, interview, 2017.

[62] LIPI, "Tjandra Wibowo: Idealisme yang Tertanam Sejak Kecil" (Idealism that Has Been Seeded Since the childhood). *Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia*, 9 August 2008, accessed

documentary programme for SCTV, where she worked, and then established a production house to supply TV stations. Samuan's early documentary, *Potret* (*Portrait*), was a short about the 'variety of culture' in Indonesia[63]. The programme started as a supplement to the daily news programmes on SCTV, but then developed into a separate programme, aired daily in 2002[64]. Wibowo went on to make other programmes: *Anganku* (*My Dream*), *Kampoeng Halaman* (*Hometown*), and *Satu Jiwa* (*One Soul*). These programmes resembled depoliticised and scenic portrayals of the multiculturalism of Indonesia. *My Dream*, a programme about children from 'four corners of Indonesia and their dreams'[65], particularly resembled *Anak Seribu Pulau* in both its topic and its scenic view, while *Hometown* portrayed multiculturalism in Indonesia, focusing on the 'interaction of ordinary people with their surroundings'[66], which also suggests the *Anak Seribu Pulau* trope.

Laksono admits that as a production house, Watchdoc copies the Samuan business model of producing current affairs and documentary programmes for broadcasters[67]. With regards to content, Laksono claimed to emulate what had been achieved by the independent filmmaker, Lexy Rambadetta, in term of producing politically engaged documentaries[68]. Rambadetta is an activist and documentary

---

on 15 December 2017, http://lipi.go.id/berita/tjandra-wibowo-:-idealisme-yang-tertanam-sejak-kecil/2422. (My translation).

[63] *Ibid.*

[64] *Ibid.*

[65] Marsita Riandini, "Dari Penyiar TV Hingga Produksi Film Dokumenter" (From TV Newscaster to Documentary Film Lroducer). *Pontianak Post*, 23rd August 2016, accessed: 23 November 2017, https://www.pontianakpost.co.id/dari-penyiar-televisi-hingga-produksi-film-dokumenter. (My translation).

[66] *Ibid.*

[67] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[68] *Ibid.*

filmmaker who established his own production house, Offstream. He produced a number of politically sensitive works, such as *Mass Grave* (2000), about the mass graveyard in Central Java as proof of the 1965 massacre in Indonesia, and *Garuda Deadly Upgrade* (2004), about the involvement of the Indonesian airline Garuda Indonesia in the assassination of Munir[69]. Rambadetta's works are not really known by the general public in Indonesia, being screened among closed circles due to the sensitivity of the topics. *Mass Grave* was screened at various festivals and film clubs with little attention from mainstream media in Indonesia, while *Garuda* was made based on a commission from SBS TV based in Australia and never gained Indonesian distribution. Laksono suggested that SCTV did once want to buy *Garuda*, but they did not agree on the pricing. Laksono said he was the contact point between SCTV and Rambadetta at that time, and based on correspondence with Rambadetta, Laksono thought that it would be ideal for a production house to produce documentaries independently, outside the broadcast system, and then be bought by television[70]. As Laksono said, 'What I thought at that moment is: occupy the TV airtime!'[71]. This combination of independent production and mainstream distribution by TV stations is the main characteristic of Laksono and Kurniawan's ideas for the way Watchdoc would operate.

---

[69] "Lexy Rambadetta," Ashoka, accessed on 18 December 2017, https://www.ashoka.org/en/fellow/lexy-rambadetta.

[70] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[71] *Ibid.*

Rambadetta is an influential figure in documentary film culture in post-1998 Indonesia, regardless of the little exposure he has amongst the general public[72]. He has influenced many documentary filmmakers from a variety of backgrounds in many documentary film workshops. Rambadetta's works also appeared in JIFFest, and had a significant influence on some documentary filmmakers, such as Yuli Andari. Andari was inspired by *Mass Grave,* and another of Rambadetta's works, *Indonesian Comfort Women: A Video of Testimony*[73]*,* a documentary about comfort women during the Japanese occupation of Indonesia. Rambadetta's works are typified by a number of characteristics: politically-sensitive subject matter, hard-hitting facts, and in-depth recording processes with minimum intervention. These traits are considered an 'ideal model' by Laksono[74].

Watchdoc was not very far from this ideal model when they produced documentaries based on commissions from Kompas TV (a TV station under the umbrella of the Kompas Gramedia Group, one of the biggest media groups in Indonesia). Going on air for the first time in September 2011, Kompas TV declared itself 'a media company that provides inspiring TV programmes that will entertain the Indonesian family'[75]. In the early days, Kompas TV programmes were considered to be produced in high quality, and they were dubbed 'the Indonesian answer to

---

[72] Lexy Rambadetta, "*Merekam Kehidupan Apa Adanya*," (Recording Life as It Is), interview with Wimar Witoelar, 28 February 2005, accessed 6 December 2018, http://www.perspektifbaru.com/wawancara/468. (My translation)

[73] Novi Kurnia, "Writing, Documentary Films and Everything in Between: A conversation with Yuli Andari" in *Indonesian Women Filmmakers* (ed.) Yvonne Michalik (Berlin: Regiospectra, 2013), 215.

[74] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[75] Maria Sherly Jevita Pratiwi. *Rancang Bangun Apikasi Pengelolaan Magang Online pada Kompas TV Surabaya.* (Application Design for Online Internship for Kompas TV Surabaya), Bachelor Thesis. (Surabaya: Stikom Surabaya), 2015, 6. (My translation).

National Geographic channel'[76]. Watchdoc secured a number of deals with Kompas TV, producing documentaries, mostly on politics and history. Some of the programmes were considered to be politically sensitive, discussing the history of rebellions against the national government or the separatist movement in Indonesia. Some of Watchdoc's flagship programmes aired at Kompas TV were *Memoir* (*Memoir*, February 2013),[77] a series of biographies of political leaders in Indonesia; *Jalan Pedang* (*Way of the Swords*, January 2014),[78] a series on armed conflict, rebellions, and separatist movements in Indonesian history; and *Bab Yang Hilang* (*Missing Chapters*, September 2013),[79] detailing some of the more controversial and forgotten moments in Indonesian history. These documentaries (especially *Jalan Pedang*) are important because the main premise was to show that Indonesia as a nation state had been through many bloody conflicts. It was thought that this should be included as part of the public consciousness to have a better understanding of the nation[80].

The space for TV stations to air politically engaged documentaries had been calculated by Laksono since the first time he designed Watchdoc with Kurniawan. He believed that a large corporation such as Kompas TV had a side that could be exploited for his 'occupying' strategy:

---

[76] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[77] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLkSanzbbw4

[78] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cWmNMsWig3k

[79] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJy65RZJgLQ

[80] Laksono, interview, 2017.

> There is a greedy side of TV stations that we can take advantage of. When we can create hype, their political affiliations will be buried under this greediness. So, they have an internal contradiction.[81]

As a journalist who had spent almost all his entire career as a broadcast journalist, Laksono believed that TV remains the most effective method for the voice to be heard and to create a discussion at the national level and beyond[82].

However, Laksono's belief that broadcasters would always follow the hype was soon challenged, when Kompas TV unilaterally cancelled an episode of *Jalan Pedang.* The episode cancelled was about *Organisasi Papua Merdeka* (Free Papua Movement), an organisation of Papuans who aspired to be independent from Indonesia[83]. Officially, the decision to air programmes belongs entirely to Kompas TV and they did not have to provide any official explanation for the cancellation[84]. However, another cancelled Watchdoc programme had a greater effect on the relationship between Watchdoc and Kompas TV, also providing a litmus test to Laksono's premise that commercial TV provided a space for politically engaged programmes in exchange for hype.

The series *Jalan Soeharto* (*Soeharto's Way*), was to be aired in September 2014. The series of 15 episodes discussed the characteristics of the New Order regime, and it was made as a reminder of the authoritarian nature of Soeharto's regime. Laksono

---

[81] "Jadi ada sisi dimana mereka ada sisi greedy yang bisa dimanfaatkan. Ketika kita bisa menciptakan hype, dan pertimbangan afiliasi2 politiknya akan dikubur oleh ke-*greedy*-an mereka sendiri. Jadi mereka punya kontradiksi di dalam dirinya." Laksono, interview, 2017.

[82] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[83] Permata PI Ariani. "Melawan Kuasa dengan Media, Studi Eksplorasi Manajemen Media Watchdoc Documentary Maker sebagai Media Alternatif" *(*Fighting Power with Media: Exploration Study of Media Management, Watchdoc Documentary Maker as Alternative Media*)* (Bachelor's degree thesis. University of Brawijaya, 2017), 103. (My translation).

[84] Laksono, interview, 2017.

said the idea came from the circulation both online (memes) and offline (in posters, stickers, and t-shirts) of an abundance of comments and jokes expressing positive nostalgia towards the Soeharto regime[85]. Watchdoc and Kompas TV manager, Apni Jaya Putra, discussed this phenomenon, which resulted in Putra commissioning Watchdoc to make a series about Soeharto's politics and flagship policies[86]. Laksono claims that Watchdoc were enthused by the programme, which had been based on thorough research to depict in detail the characteristics of Soeharto's administration in each episode[87]. They even collected an old edition of *Prisma*, the only quasi-academic journal published in Indonesia during the Soeharto era that provided in-depth analysis of the New Order policies, and asked the producers to read and discuss the materials extensively[88]. However, even though Kompas TV had paid Watchdoc in full, the programme was cancelled.

The cancellation came after Putra was removed from his position, and his replacement decided not to air the programme. Watchdoc Programme Manager, Hellena Souisa, stated that Kompas TV's comments about the cancellation has been inconsistent[89]. For example, Kompas objected to the script in which the former New Order leader Soeharto was mentioned as just merely Soeharto, rather than 'Pak Harto' (a paternalistic greeting for a fatherly figure), as he wanted to be called during his reign[90]. Souisa said the request was fabricated, because even when Watchdoc said

---

[85] *Ibid*.

[86] Souisa, interview, 2017.

[87] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[88] *Ibid.*

[89] Souisa, interview, 2017.

[90] *Ibid.*

they were willing to change the entire script, Kompas TV did not follow it up[91]. Laksono and Souisa felt this unilateral policy had hindered the public from receiving good quality information needed for political education about the authoritarian regime of the New Order[92]. Watchdoc even offered to buy back the series from Kompas TV to sell it on or distribute it for free, but Kompas rejected the offer[93]. This taught a hard lesson to Watchdoc not to sell the permanent rights to their programmes[94].

This programme cancellation implies that the space for political documentary within TV stations is limited and vulnerable, even when the subject matter barely touches on the regime in power. Laksono speculates that the cancellation came from the editor-in-chief of Kompas TV, Rosiana Silalahi, who had just been appointed when the programme was about to be aired[95]. Laksono mentioned a close relationship between Silalahi and the daughter of the former President Soeharto, which could have influenced this decision[96]. Silalahi was also the editor-in-chief at SCTV when Laksono took out a legal suit against the company in 2004, and so Kurniawan speculated even further that Silalahi had held a personal grudge against Watchdoc for that reason[97].

---

[91] *Ibid.*

[92] *Ibid*, also Laksono, interview, 2017.

[93] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[94] Andy Panca Kurniawan, interview with the author, 22 December 2016.

[95] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[96] *Ibid*.

[97] Kurniawan, interview, 2016.

The cancellation made Watchdoc realise the risk of relying on commercial television for the circulation of sensitive subject matter to the public. Despite this, television remains the strongest medium for this purpose for Laksono, as he believes that TV stations can provide nation-wide coverage and the subject matter can enter the public arena for debate if necessary, as part of political education or even to influence public policy[98]. This model has also benefitted Watchdoc financially as the production can guarantee enough revenue for the company to operate properly[99].

More generally, Watchdoc is a relatively small company. During its heyday from 2011 to 2014, Watchdoc held contracts with three main clients (Kompas TV, Bloomberg TV [pay channel], and the online media Geotimes), with total earnings around IDR 5 billion (US$342 thousand) per annum[100]. Kurniawan, in charge of business for Watchdoc (with Laksono responsible for the editorial side), recalled that at the peak of their operation, Watchdoc could produce 13 episodes a month for 3 programmes running concurrently, therefore in total producing 39 episodes per month[101]. This production scale was manageable, regardless of a hectic newsroom in the Watchdoc office[102]. Laksono and Kurniawan considered this is an ideal model, where they could produce documentaries independently that were then circulated through mainstream TV channels, making a profit in the process. Then they had the scope to run side projects like making non-commercial documentary films.

---

[98] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[99] Kurniawan, interview, 2017.

[100] *Ibid.*

[101] Ariani, “Melawan Kuasa”, 98.

[102] Ariani, “Melawan Kuasa”, 98.

These non-commercial documentaries came from the idea that Watchdoc, besides being a production house, also operated as a media company that produced and circulated their own media, based on their editorial policy[103]. Laksono, Kurniawan, and programme manager Souisa all insist that the main reason for Watchdoc being established was to produce politically engaged documentaries that were critical of authority, and to provide political education to citizens. Thus, these documentaries were made to fulfil that function[104]. In this regard, Watchdoc operated like a media organisation, conducting routine editorial meetings like a regular newsroom and collecting footage based on topics they thought important to be made into documentaries, even if they did not always know when they would be produced[105]. Souisa suggests that this model was unique, because production houses do not usually have a newsroom and any meetings regarding content are usually held as incidental events, according to what is needed for the documentary in production for their commercial clients[106].

During the heyday period of 2011 to 2014, Watchdoc made a number of non-commercial documentaries, including *Alkinemokiye* (*From Struggle Dawns New Hope*, 2011, about a labour strike at Freeport, the biggest gold mining company in Indonesia) and *Linimassa* (*Timeliness*, 2012[107], about social media use in Indonesia). A limited number of these documentaries were distributed among small circles, mostly civil society organisations and specialised festivals. *Alkinemokiye* received a very good

---

[103] Souisa, interview, 2017.

[104] *Ibid.*

[105] *Ibid.*

[106] *Ibid.*

[107] http://linimassa.org/

reception when screened by activists and student associations, especially for generating discussion on inequality and injustice in Papua in general[108]. Because of the portrayal of the Free Papua Movement in *Alkinemokiye*, the film was banned by the police in the Screen Below the Wind Festival[109] in Bali after having been scheduled to be screened on 16th November 2012[110]. The documentary *Alkinemokiye* used a strong narrative contrasting Freeport gold mining company's revenue with the poverty of the local people who worked at the company. It included the depiction of the police force dismissing peaceful union demonstrations with the shooting of live ammunition. It remained in circulation until 2015, and had been screened on various occasions by activist groups. Scheduled to be screened on 1st May 2015 to celebrate May Day,[111] it was banned by the administrator of the University of Brawijaya, Malang.

---

[108] Galuh Nurul, Luthfian Haekal, Sukma Prametasari, "*Alkinemokiye, Perjuangan Buruh Lokal Mencari Keadilan Upah*" (Struggle of Local Labour for Wage Equality), in *Balairung Press*, 12 November 2015, accessed on 17th December 2018, http://www.balairungpress.com/2015/11/alkinemokiye-perjuangan-buruh-lokal-mencari-keadilan-upah/. (My translation).

[109] Screen Below the Wind Festival is a one-time documentary film festival held in Bali, 16-18 November 2012. It was meant to be a "space for cultural exchange" among documentary filmmakers and documentary photographers from Southeast Asian countries. Documentary filmmaker and former TV journalist Iwan Setiawan organised the festival, with initial funding from the Ministry of Education. The festival's website is now defunct and very little information about this festival is available online apart from blogs and online forums. I mainly got the information from In-Docs director Amelia Hapsari (Hapsari, Interview, 2016), and an article from *Tempo Online*: Rofiqi Hasan, "*Pembuat Film Dokumenter ASEAN Kumpul di Bali*" (ASEAN Documentary Filmmakers Gathered in Bali). *Tempo*, 17 November 2012, accessed 15 December 2018, https://seleb.tempo.co/read/442265/pembuat-film-dokumenter-asean-berkumpul-di-ubud/full&view=ok. (My translation).

[110] Iwan Yulianto, "*Film Alkinemokiye, Perjuangan Melawan Penjajahan Freeport di Bumi Papua*" (Struggle Against Freeport Colonialism in the Land of Papua), in *Iwan Yulianto*, 26 November 2012, accessed 15 December 2018, https://iwanyuliyanto.wordpress.com/2012/11/26/film-alkinemokiye-perjuangan-melawan-penjajahan-freeport-di-bumi-papua/#comment-5941. (My translation).

[111] Dyah Ayu Pitaloka, "*Universitas Brawijaya Larang Dokumenter Alkinemokiye, Samin Vs Semen*" (University of Brawijaya Banned Alkinemokiye and Samin Vs Semen documentaries"

The banning of this and other critical documentaries produced by Watchdoc on a non-commercial basis has cemented Watchdoc's reputation as an activist group among NGOs, student associations, and labour unions. Laksono and Kurniawan have said that they never received any financial benefits from these non-commercial documentaries. On the contrary, they have suffered financial difficulties because of them.[112] This will be discussed in the next section.

Reflecting on the notion of publicness, Watchdoc offers a litmus test in general for the possibility of publicness in commercial media organisations in Indonesia, as argued by Edwin Jurriens,[113] who believes in the capacity of commercial media to generate publicness and a culture of dialogue necessary for public opinion-making and political deliberation[114]. However, from the Watchdoc case, it is evident that such possibilities rely on personal networking. Networking was mentioned by Laksono, Kurniawan, and Souisa with regard to Watchdoc's business activities and distribution of the documentaries since the inception of the organisation. Laksono mentioned his vast network in television that enabled Watchdoc to receive commissions, 'because they know our quality'[115]. Good communication and trust building with Kompas TV General Manager for Programming and Documentary Productions, Apni Jaya Putra, also proved to be one of the key factors for smooth production and circulation with

---

in *Rappler*, 21 April 2015, , accessed on 15 December 2018, https://www.rappler.com/world/regions/asia-pacific/indonesia/90704-universitas-brawijaya-larang-dokumenter-alkinemokiye-samin-semen. (My translation).

[112] Laksono, interview, 2017; Kurniawan, interview, 2016.

[113] Jurriens, *From Monologue,* 25.

[114] Jurriens, *From Monologue,* 25-6.

[115] Laksono, interview, 2017.

Kompas TV[116], enabling political documentaries with strong topics about the nation state and bloody conflicts to be aired during TV prime time.

However, Watchdoc's ideal model was affected by a challenge from the TV industry in general. After the appointment of Rosiana Silalahi, Kompas TV changed their main programming focus from features and documentaries to news and current affairs, because of low ratings[117]. This change had a significant impact on Watchdoc, as Kompas TV stopped commissioning Watchdoc altogether from early 2015. This decision caused significant revenue loss for Watchdoc, but, most importantly, it also made them think about alternative modes of circulation. For this, they took inspiration from an event in Manado, the capital city of North Sulawesi Province, located around 3,300 kilometres from Jakarta.

The *Jalan Pedang* episode about the Permesta Rebellion (Perlawanan Rakyat Semesta or People's Universal of Struggle) was screened at an expo held in Manado in 2014. Permesta was a protest in the 1950s against the central government in Jakarta, originating from dissatisfaction and then developing into armed conflict in North Sulawesi[118]. Watchdoc's episode on Permesta is an encyclopaedic portrayal of the protest (made mainly from interviews with historians, witnesses, and photos from the National Archive) and how it turned into an armed conflict. Laksono received a report from his contact in Manado that this particular episode was due to be screened in an open-air cinema setting during the expo and 'hundreds if not

---

[116] Souisa, interview, 2017.

[117] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[118] For Permesta see Amelia Liwe, "Remembering Permesta", in *Inside Indonesia*, 16 December 2010, accessed 11 December 2018, https://www.insideindonesia.org/remembering-permesta.

thousands'[119] of people would watch it. Laksono considered the massive amount of people attending the event as a manifestation of the journalistic value of 'proximity based on emotional bond' of people in North Sulawesi (known also as Minahasa ethnic group) to the Permesta movement[120]. This later inspired Watchdoc to screen their documentaries in open-air settings where publicness emerged more closely connected to a site-specific and face-to-face event, as will be discussed later.

Watchdoc and non-government organisations

This section further discusses the organisational format of Watchdoc as a private company and its relations with NGOs and other civil society organisations. The core issue in this section is the question of independence, in terms of freedom from direct financial gain, political affiliation, and other short-term benefits. Further, it considers impartiality related to Watchdoc's position as an activist organisation. This explains their decision to take the format of a private company, to maintain their independence from any allegation of taking money from government or 'foreign' sources, which could be politicised or used to disqualify their argument in public debate. Together with this explanation I explore the possibility that publicness emerged from an activist group in the documentary film culture in Indonesia, which is linked to the notion of independence in a wider socio-political context, and not only being independent from mainstream cinema culture. To do so, a brief explanation

[119] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[120] *Ibid.*

about the civil society movement and NGOs in Indonesia will provide the environment in which Watchdoc was born and continues to operate.

Public perception about Watchdoc as a civil society organisation is best described by an anecdote told to me by Watchdoc Programme Manager, Hellena Souisa.[121] One day in 2014, Watchdoc was invited by a quasi-governmental organisation (the National Commission of Human Rights), to provide input on the annual report of human rights issues in Indonesia. On the invitation list, all the invitees are civil society organisations, and the format of the organisations are either *Yayasan* (Foundation) or *Perkumpulan* (Association). Watchdoc was the only private company invited into the meeting. Yayasan is the legal entity for civic association based on civic activity (such as for charity, educational and social works functions) while Perkumpulan is the legal entity for associations based on membership (such as associations of lawyers, and associations of journalists, medical doctors and other professions)[122]. Watchdoc was the only private company attending the event, without anybody else being aware of that[123].

This perception of Watchdoc's as a sort of NGO was also apparent during my fieldwork, where Laksono and Kurniawan asked me to observe them interviewing a few applicants for their upcoming project. Laksono had to explain to the applicants that Watchdoc is a private company and the applicants, if they were to work for Watchdoc, were expected to produce audio-visual materials for profit, including the

---

[121] Souisa, interview, 2017.

[122] Lingkar LSM, "Apa beda yayasan dan perkumpulan?" (What is the difference between yayasan and perkumpulan), *Lingkar LSM*, 26 March 2013, accessed on 9 December 2018, http://lingkarlsm.com/apa-beda-yayasan-dan-perkumpulan/. (My translation).

[123] Souisa, interview, 2017.

likes of company profiles. This came as a big surprise for all the applicants interviewed that day[124].

Looking at how Watchdoc operates, the documentaries they have produced and their appearance in media reports, the fact that Watchdoc is a private company comes as a surprise, even for me and some documentary film activists. Kurniawan explains to me that from the entire Watchdoc activities, about ninety percent of the work they have done is produced for commercial purposes, either as documentaries or in other audio-visual materials, while only ten percent is produced for non-commercial purposes, such as *Alkinemokiye* (2011) and *Linimassa* (2012), and he admits that the impact of those non-commercial films are huge for public perception of Watchdoc[125].

The reason behind the decision to establish a private company, rather than an NGO[126], for doing activism work should be seen in the context of the development of NGOs and activism in Indonesia. NGOs and civil society groups in Indonesia were subject to state control during the New Order era. Many civil associations were operating in Indonesia and modern NGOs were established in 1970s[127]. Freedom of association was guaranteed by the 1945 Constitution, but in practice it was strictly limited by the state during the New Order period. Religious associations, neighbourhood organisations and the likes were allowed, but NGOs that have critical viewpoints on the government were not permitted.

---

[124] Personal fieldwork note, 16 August 2016.

[125] Kurniawan, interview, 2016.

[126] This is the model that was set up by Garin Nugroho and the logic behind In-Docs operation as explained in the chapter 4 on In-Docs.

[127] Antlov, Brinkerhoff and Rapp, "Civil Society," 440.

In the mid-1980s, the government issued an important law to control civil associations by introducing the concept of "*wadah tunggal*" (single pot) of organisation, which "seeks to compel organizations that share similarities based on activity, profession, function, and religion to be organized as a single organization"[128]. During that time, control of NGOs was even stricter and the ones that existed were mostly to complement to the state's national development project, as a result of which they were called "development NGOs"[129]. Many profession-based associations – such as farmers, labour, journalists, and even filmmakers – could only be established by government sanction. Any other similar organisation would be disbanded, and in some cases the founders might be prosecuted[130]. Some of these early NGOs operated under surveillance of the state, with some still taking roles as 'watchdog organisations', especially on environmental and human rights problems[131]—such as *Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia* (YLBHI, Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation) and *Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia* (WALHI, The Friends of the Earth Indonesia). In general, NGOs were operating within the limited parameters allowed by the state. This situation was epitomised in the famous research institute *Lembaga Penelitian, Pendidikan dan Penerangan Ekonomi dan Sosial* (LP3ES or Institute for Economic and Social Research, Education and Information), established in 1971. This was an NGO that attracted critically-minded, young intellectuals and former student activists[132]. Their main output was the quasi-

---

[128] Eryanto Nugroho, "Bill on Societal Organizations," 16.

[129] Antlov, Brinkerhoff and Rapp, "Civil Society," 439.

[130] Sen, *Indonesian Cinema*, 55.

[131] Antlöv, Ibrahim, and van Tuijl, "NGO governance," 150.

[132] Aspinall, *Opposing Suharto*, 90.

academic journal *Prisma*[133] that criticised the main policies of the New Order regime across various sectors and provided alternatives. Australian scholar Edward Aspinall categorised LP3ES as a proto-opposition to the New Order that later played an important role when the New Order introduced limited '*keterbukaan*' (openness): by the mid-1990s, LP3ES and other NGOs such as YLBHI and WALHI had together 'become virtually synonymous with criticism of the government'[134].

After Soeharto fell, NGOs and other civil society organisations considered how to provide imaginings of how politics could be undertaken without Soeharto, something that was unimaginable during the New Order[135]. Moreover, many considered that NGOs could be the key players in maintaining democracy in post-authoritarian Indonesia, as the law that restricted the freedom of associations was revoked and many new NGOs were established to counterbalance the state in a more serious fashion[136]. Those NGOs that were active as watchdog organisations or providing advocacy have since become the main building block for the expansion of civil society in Indonesia after the political change of 1998[137]. It is during the transition period that the Indonesian film community, especially Garin Nugroho, established the SET Foundation[138]. Through this group the industry managed to make a link to the NGO

---

[133] Watchdoc referred to *Prisma* for its documentaries about Soeharto's regime.

[134] Aspinall, *Opposing Soeharto,* 88-89.

[135] Aspinall states: "NGOs became means for activists to create new linkages across class boundaries. Overall, however, perhaps the most important role played by NGOs was encouraging a new kind of political imagining which, in contrast to the New Order's emphasis on state guidance and control, promoted societal self-reliance and popular participation." Aspinall, *Opposing Soeharto,* 87.

[136] Antlöv, Ibrahim, and Tuijl, "NGO governance," 150.

[137] *Ibid.*

[138] See chapter on In-Docs.

community with a working group called *Visi Anak Bangsa* (Vision of Children of the Nation) to produce audio-visual materials, documentary films, and mostly public service announcements for broadcast on TV, and to welcome the 1999 general election[139]. Subsequently, other filmmakers began to expand their possible funding resources to transnational NGOs, philanthropic, and charity organisations to produce fiction films and documentaries suited to the mission of these particular non-profit organisations[140]. As discussed in the chapter 4 on In-Docs, transnational NGOs and philanthropic organisations such as the Ford Foundation have provided funding to post-1998 filmmakers, producers, and festival organisers such as Shanty Harmayn with YMFFI (the umbrella organisation of In-Docs), Nia Dinata with the Kalyana Shira Foundation, and also Hafiz Rancajale with Arkipel Experimental and Documentary Festival[141]. These organisations have undertaken their activities by opening up spaces for their cultural products.

Watchdoc has decided to take different path, being inspired from other business models that they think might enable them to be more successful in running their business. Therefore, there will be no issue with sustainability, a problem that usually happens to non-profit organisations in Indonesia[142]. This happened with Laksono when an NGO and community media organisation he established in 2005, *Aceh Kita* (Our Aceh) faced a difficult struggle with sustainability issues because of the lack of

---

[139] See the chapter on Indocs, also Stephen Peter Atkinson, "Watching Indonesia: An Ethnography of The Ether," (PhD thesis, Flinders University, 2002), 203-205.

[140] See chapter on In-Docs. See also Makbul Mubarak, "Funding Screening Access Confines Aesthetics of Documentary Filmmaker", in *The Jakarta Post*, 27 April 2014, accessed on 17 December 2018, https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/04/27/funding-screening-access-confines-aesthetics-documentary-filmmakers.html.

[141] See Paramaditha, "The Wild Child's Desire," 70.

[142] Laksono, interview, 2017.

funding[143]. In their evaluation of working with NGOs in Indonesia, Antlov et.al have concluded that sustainable financing has been one of the main concerns to almost all NGOs and many attempts—such as approaching big corporations and asking for contributions from their supporters—have been made to substitute reliance on external funding[144].

Besides sustainability, Watchdoc has other considerations. First, Watchdoc considers that the funding from NGOs is not really suitable for the nature of their activities. Laksono mentions that transnational NGOs and other funding agencies are not willing to be involved when it comes to sensitive subjects, or what he labels 'core programmes'[145]. Laksono gives examples with what happened to the Indonesian journalists' association, *Aliansi Jurnalis Independent* (Independent Journalist Alliance of Indonesia or AJI)

> For example, AJI. There is much funding for training on gender mainstreaming of journalists for AJI members, but when they need funding for advocating for a journalist being beaten [by thugs or the security apparatus during reporting] there will be no funding. When AJI advocates press freedom in Papua, there is no funding. [Transnational NGO] funding is a support system, [limited to activities such as] capacity building.[146]

Looking at the depiction of violence and shooting with live ammunition at peaceful demonstrators that was carried out by the Indonesian police force in *Alkinemokiye*, Watchdoc have a strong point about the limitations of external funding

---

[143] *Ibid.*

[144] Antlov, Brinkerhoff and Rapp, "Civil Society," 439.

[145] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[146] "*Funding AJI untuk training banyak. Funding AJI untuk gender mainstreaming banyak. Tapi ketika ada wartawan digebuk, ngga ada fundingnya. Ketika AJI ngomong menyuarakan kebebasan pers di Papua, ngga ada funding yang mau terima. Jadi, di hard core kegiatan NGO di Indonesia, itu malah ngga ada fundingnya."* Laksono, *Interview*, 2017.

mechanisms for such hard-hitting topics. They have never tried to seek funding, since they consider self-funding will enable them to be free in providing what they need to say to the audience[147].

Second, Watchdoc has avoided the path taken by the SET Foundation related to collaboration with other NGOs on campaign materials, and NGO campaign strategy in general. Laksono explains how particular NGOs avoid using other NGOs' campaign material because of the logo at the end credits. Laksono gives the example of how the Indonesian branch of Oxfam use a Watchdoc documentary on food problems to campaign on the issue, saying they cannot use a similar video from WALHI (The Friends of the Earth), for example. because of WALHI's logo at the end credit[148]. For Laksono, this creates a serious obstacle for NGO campaigns, because in an effective campaign, the public should identify themselves with the issues and not only affiliate with a group, as group affiliation could create vulnerabilities[149]. According to Laksono, it is essential for Watchdoc that any NGOs are free to circulate their documentaries without being burdened by the organisation's logos. For example, if a Watchdoc documentary carried the Ford Foundation logo, then automatically NGOs funded by The Asia Foundation would not circulate those documentaries because these organisations are in competition with each other[150]. For Laksono, this is an ordeal that Watchdoc must bypass; by not receiving any funding for their non-commercial documentaries, any NGOs are then free to circulate the documentaries according to

---

[147] See Mubarak, "Funding screening".

[148] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[149] *Ibid.*

[150] *Ibid.*

their need without the issue of identification, and they can therefore reach a wider audience[151].

Here, Watchdoc treat themselves as part of a wider social movement and as one of the actors in a wide array of activism in Indonesia, which also happens to produce and circulate documentary films as its main activity. As part of a social movement, Watchdoc focuses on linking themselves to issues rather than building alliances with NGOs and other civil society groups. Organisations such as Oxfam, YLBHI, or WALHI are merely actors in the social movement[152]. At the beginning of their operation, Watchdoc assisted NGOs. However, when they discovered that some NGOs were not operating in an ethical manner (*berengsek*) they decided to advocate the issues instead, rather than assisting the organisations. Laksono explains:

> We are now advocating issues. Should any friends be working on that issue, they will be assisted [with our documentaries]. So, the beneficiary is not the NGO but the general public. For example, when we made *Belakang Hotel* [*Hotel's Backyard*, a documentary about the water crisis in Yogyakarta as the effect of the tourism industry], we checked whether any NGOs were working on that issue. There was no NGO working on that, and all the protesters were ordinary citizens. Then we jumped in [to produce the documentary].[153]

In this regard, they see other NGOs, civil society organisations, and individuals as actors with whom they can collaborate on the issues they consider important. The priority of defining issues for Watchdoc, as already mentioned, occurs in the newsroom. Here, Watchdoc operates like a media organisation equipped with two main divisions in considering what documentaries must be made: Watchdoc

---

[151] *Ibid.*

[152] *Ibid.*

[153] *"Kami sekarang advokasi isunya, jadi kalau kebetulan ada temen yang isu di situ, merekalah yang terbantu, beneficiary-nya bukan lagi NGO, tetapi benefirciary nya masyarakatnya. Sehingga ketika bikin Belakang Hotel, tidak ada NGO di situ, semuanya warga, cair, massa cair. Ya kami masuk."* Laksono, interview, 2017.

Professional (Watchdoc Pro) and Watchdoc Original (Watchdoc Ori)[154]. Watchdoc Pro is basically their commercial work produced for their commercial clients (such as Kompas TV, Bloomberg TV, and WWF among others), while Watchdoc Ori is the 'original', non-commercial Watchdoc documentaries, such as *Alkinemokiye*, *Linimassa,* and many more besides.

It is within the division of Watchdoc Ori that Laksono and Kurniawan consider the organisation to be part of a social movement, responsible for producing documentaries that will advance particular issues in the public domain. The documentaries in this division—besides those which are self-funded—are sometimes made to respond to certain requests from NGOs and civil society groups who need urgent campaign material or advocacy material. When they think the issues are important and the requests are genuine, they discuss the request in the editorial meeting. The example for this is their flagship project, *Jakarta Unfair*, which was made to respond to a request that came to Laksono after the screening of their other documentary, *Kala Benoa* (about land reclamation in Bali)[155]. After the screening, a student asked Laksono why they had only made a documentary about environmental damage in Bali, while Jakarta and other coastal cities in Java are also suffering with similar problems caused by land reclamation[156]. Laksono took this seriously, suggesting to the newsroom that they make a documentary about land reclamation in Jakarta and the surrounding areas.

---

[154] Laksono, interview, 2017. Also see Watchdoc company profile.

[155] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[156] *Ibid.*

Other activities that fall into this non-commercial bracket are training and education on documentary filmmaking, and video documentation in general[157]. Different to In-Docs, who provide training with funding from the Ford Foundation, Watchdoc never put this training into a proposal and mostly receive invitations from student associations or labour unions to conduct workshops on documentary filmmaking[158]. Training levels differ, from basic camera work to video advocacy, or using video documentary to campaign on certain issues. Therefore, Watchdoc training—compared to sophisticated In-Docs' training or FFD workshops conducted in English without translation[159]—are simple and very pragmatic with simple objectives: making video documentaries or even just documentation as part of a social movement[160]. One of the biggest achievements of this training for Laksono is when the graduates are capable of making video documentaries on any issues that have occurred in their surroundings. It was evident that this had been achieved when a Watchdoc graduate made a documentary about land conflict between the locals and the security apparatus around the development of New Yogyakarta International Airport: the video was used by the local Legal Aid Foundation in advocating for the victims of the conflict[161].

The Watchdoc Pro rubric is basically a commercial production that takes jobs from any clients, with an important exception that will be discussed shortly. Any commissioning jobs, including from NGOs, are treated as commercial products like

---

[157] Dandhy Laksono, interview with the author, 22 December 2016.

[158] *Ibid.*

[159] See the previous chapters on In-Docs and FFD.

[160] Laksono, interview, 2016.

[161] Laksono, interview, 2016.

the documentaries produced for Kompas TV, Bloomberg TV, or any company profile of corporate clients[162]. This happens even when the issues are quite similar to their own cause. For example, a documentary entitled *Pasar Gotong Royong* (*Collective Market*) tells the story of a protest against city planning by traders in a market in West Java. The documentary was commissioned by a local NGO called the TIFA Foundation[163] and it is only available on the TIFA Foundation website (and not even on the Watchdoc website). Another example is that of a documentary criticising child labour in the tobacco industry, commissioned by Human Rights Watch[164].

This separation can also be understood with regards to the Watchdoc hybrid organisational format, as a mixture of a media organisation and a production house. As a production house, they adopt certain principles from media organisations called *pagar api* (firewall), a strict self-regulation and code of conduct to separate the 'journalism product' from advertorials[165]. With their key personnel having backgrounds as journalists, Watchdoc were able to understand this principle quite easily and treat any commissioned work as commercial product[166]. By doing this, Watchdoc (like any media company) will be able to claim that their newsroom (Watchdoc Ori) operates independently from the commercial production (Watchdoc Pro), and that they always separate the editorial decisions from commercial

---

[162] See Watchdoc Company Profile, 2017.

[163] TIFA, "Pasar Gotong Royong: Gugatan Para Pedagang terhadap Proses Revitalisasi Pasar Limbangan", in *TIFA*, accessed on 13th December 2017, https://www.tifafoundation.org/pasar-gotong-royong-gugatan-para-pedagang-terhadap-proses-revitalisasi-pasar-limbangan/.

[164] The video is available online "Hazardous child labour on Indonesian tobacco farms" in HumanRightsWatch, 24 May 2016, accessed on 16 December 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJnrsCGDpOY.

[165] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[166] *Ibid.*

decisions[167]. Watchdoc feel this ethical stance is very important to maintain impartiality and to keep their argument intact in the public domain. Thus, they can avoid any attack on their credibility based on ad hominem arguments or rebuttals based on conflict of interest in their criticism.

This ethical stance has cost them a fortune because they have heavily criticised big corporations in their documentaries. Laksono illustrates this with Watchdoc's refusal to take on a big job from a huge property development company, Sinar Mas Group, to produce video profiles of their project. Watchdoc have no direct or indirect connection to Sinar Mas—one of the biggest property developers in the country. The reason for the rejection is because Sinar Mar is a property developer and Watchdoc produced a documentary entitled *Rayuan Pulau Palsu* (*Fake Island*, directed by Rudi Purwo Saputro) that heavily criticised another large property developer Agung Podomoro for its land reclamation project in Jakarta. Watchdoc were concerned that if they received any deal from Sinar Mas, they would be vulnerable to being accused of taking money from Sinar Mas to attack Podomoro with *Rayuan Pulau Palsu*[168]. Additionally, it might be considered that Sinar Mas approached Watchdoc in order not to be attacked in their next project (which is what happened to Agung Podomoro)[169]. Laksono describes this ethical issue:

> How can you criticise Podomoro [with your film] and then tomorrow you take a job from them? There is no legal or ethical problem for mainstream media organisation, since they have a clear separation between business and editorial, but not for Watchdoc! Let's say, I talk about cement in my film, and then I take job from Holcim [a multinational cement company], my film will be finished! It will lose its credibility. Once we made *Samin versus Semen* [a documentary about conflicts between locals and a cement company backed

[167] *Ibid.*

[168] *Ibid.*

[169] *Ibid.*

> by German cement company Heidelberg], we cannot take any job from any cement company, regardless of if it comes from their competitor such as Holcim. Finish! Once we did that, we'd kill our own documentary, even when we explained that we have the firewall principle.[170]

All these reasons have made Watchdoc to take a commercial private company format for their organisation rather than an NGO or double-door organisation, which has two separate doors, one for commercial and the other for non-commercial products in the same roof.

By positioning themselves as part of a social movement, Watchdoc's organisational format is not really a problem in advancing issues to the public. In defining what issues they have to work on in their documentaries, Laksono said Watchdoc simplify the array of choices by adopting a framework provided by two international covenants based on the UN Bill of Rights[171]. These are the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights[172] and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights[173]. At the beginning, Watchdoc produced documentaries related to civil and political rights (or *Sipol* in their daily parlance from *sipil*—civil and *politik*—politics). They changed the coverage into economic, social, and cultural rights or *Ekosob*, an acronym of *ekonomi* (economy), *sosial* (social), and *budaya* (cultural)

---

[170] *"Masak elo gebukin Podomoro besok ada iklannya Podomoro. Tapi secara legal, secara etik ngga ada yang dilanggar. Karena itulah. Watchdoc ngga bisa bung! Walaupun gue ngomongin semen hari gini, besok gue negrjain proflnya Holcim, habis lah film semen gue. Jadi kami, walaupun kami bisa berlindung di balik pagar api, orang ngga akan percaya. Sehingga pagar api kami lebih ketat. Begitu kita bikin Samin versus Semen, semua proyek semen entah itu Holcim ngga bisa kami kerjain. Selesai. Once kami ngerjain, kami kayak ngebunuh film ini. Karena habis semua kredibilitasnya. Walaupun kami bisa jelaskan ini ada pagar api."* Laksono, interview, 2017.

[171] https://web.archive.org/web/20080313093428/http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu6/2/fs2.htm

[172] https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx

[173] *Ibid.*

because there have been too many actors who played in the field of civil and political rights[174]. Looking at this newsroom agenda, Watchdoc could be defined as an activist group working in the documentary film field, regardless of their institutional format as a private company.

The Watchdoc case as described so far has demonstrated the shift in organisations working on political transformation from a 'do it yourself (DIY) culture' into the embeddedness of cultural forms in what McLagan and McKee call 'architecture of circulation'[175]. This concept is based on the notion that 'platforms are not neutral spaces, but sites that produce the image politically'[176]. Moreover, 'platforms demand particular representational forms, are coded with their own epistemological norms, and employ their own mode of address[177]. As Paramaditha asserts in her dissertation, organisations such as In-Docs and other 'cultural producers' (such as filmmakers, producers, festival organisers, and film club programmers) in Indonesia work within the parameters of 'scenario of experiment', explained as 'rehearsed in DIY (do it yourself), became a prevalent mode of production: fund your own project, make your own institution, create your own audience'[178]. This view tends to focus on political action as an act of individuals and seen 'as episodic and opportunistic acts of tactical sabotage against monolithically conceived systems of domination'[179]. Therefore this 'scenario of experiment' and DIY

---

[174] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[175] McLagan and McKee, "Introduction," 17.

[176] *Ibid*.

[177] *Ibid.*

[178] Paramaditha, "Wild Child's Desire," 25.

[179] McLagan and McKee, "Introduction," 17.

culture are not suitable to understand Watchdoc. I borrow this 'architecture of circulation' to see their documentaries as embedded in the platform, as can be seen in the institutional format of the organisation and the practice of open-air cinema, to circulate their documentaries. The material network of this circulation is also very important because 'they shape the nature of the cultural forms that travel along them, but also like platforms, they are political actors themselves'[180]. Platforms, modes of circulation, and the act of 'making public are forms of political action in and of themselves'[181]. This is particularly done when Watchdoc shifted their mode of circulation from television into open air cinema or *layar tancap* as the manifestation of this architecture of circulation.

Documentaries and *layar tancap*

This section discusses the circulation of Watchdoc documentaries, focusing on the open-air cinema screenings in former slum areas where the inhabitants are being forcibly evicted because of city rejuvenation programmes. The site-specificity and materiality of this circulation are taken into account. In turn, these screenings make public not only the logical argument about justice and discrimination against the underprivileged, but also emotional and passionate expressions that generate solidarity. Thus, from this method of circulation there emerged a sense of publicness that was influenced by sentiment and emotion.

---

[180] *Ibid.*

[181] *Ibid*, 18.

Another important point to discuss here is the materiality of circulation 'that shape[s] the cultural forms that travel along them'[182]. From this observation, I would like to argue that publicness as engagement emerged with particular aesthetics that take into account the mode of circulation and its materiality, which can be influenced by and expressed in sentiment and emotions.

Watchdoc's idea for open-air screenings was based on the limitations of infrastructure as their contract with Kompas TV ended at the end of 2014[183]. Prior to this, their documentaries had already screened in non-theatrical settings—mostly in cafés, student halls, NGO meeting rooms, and training venues, for example. However, to use open-air screenings as a strategy of circulation results from the limited access to the platform they consider ideal: television. As already mentioned, Watchdoc had realised the potency of open-air screening when one of the *Jalan Pedang* episodes was screened by Kompas Gramedia (a sister company of Kompas TV, subsidiary of Kompas Group) in an expo in Manado[184].

Screening in open-air settings is not altogether foreign in cinema culture in Indonesia. Rather, it has been an important part of cinema culture, cultivated in Indonesia, both organically and politically. Organically, open-air cinema has been an important part of social and cultural ceremonies, mainly in suburban or rural areas. During the New Order era there were open-air cinema operators with film projectors, masts and screens carried in open trucks. Masts were stuck into the ground and the screen spanned in-between the masts. The Indonesian term for this open-air cinema,

---

[182] *Ibid*.

[183] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[184] *Ibid.*

layar tancap (literally meaning 'screen stuck on the ground'[185], originates from these stuck masts and spanned screens.

During the New Order era and until quite recently, *layar tancap* has been the main cinema attraction in rural and suburban settings for social events and ceremonies as part of folk entertainment. The films screened were usually in 16 mm celluloid formats (or sometimes 35 mm)[186], with film selections made by the exhibitors, sometimes based on requests from the ceremony owners[187]. During the New Order era, this *layar tancap* became an important vehicle for the New Order to circulate audio-visual materials that they considered important to communicate in rural areas. Ekky Imanjaya explores the political aspects of *layar tancap* in relation to two aspects[188]. First, *layar tancap* is part of the politics of film distribution, especially related to competition among film exhibitors (for example, *layar tancap* versus theatrical exhibitors). Film regulators at the time intervened—based on input from theatrical exhibitors—by forbidding *layar tancap* to screen international films, and by putting time intervals between the theatrical release and *layar tancap* screening for Indonesian films, thus resulting in *layar tancap* films being mostly B-class movies[189]. Second, exhibitors of *layar tancap* were obliged to screen state-made instructional films (*film penyuluhan*) and documentary series on the success of national

---

[185] Imanjaya, "The Cultural Traffic," 82. I would like to maintain this term, *layar tancap*, rather than appropriating it into 'open-air cinema' as used by Imanjaya, to keep the historicity of the Indonesian experience in these events, including the social and political factors that influenced it.

[186] Imanjaya. "The Cultural Traffic*,"* 92.

[187] *Ibid,* 80.

[188] *Ibid,* 88-90.

[189] *Ibid,* 97.

development projects (such as *Gelora Indonesia*)[190]. The New Order regime made *layar tancap* the 'spearhead of national cinema' (*ujung tombak film nasional*), especially considering the importance of the cinema audience in non-urban settings[191]. However, gradually the old style *layar tancap* has died away, as it cannot compete with other types of entertainment, including the availability of DVDs (mostly pirated) and internet streaming. Thus, as a business venture, *layar tancap* has become unprofitable[192].

Recently, there has been a return of *layar tancap* in urban settings, as nostalgia, at JIFFest in 2013[193]. The open-air screening was already in place for the 2008 JIFFest edition as a fringe section[194], but in 2013, the format became the main staple of JIFFest, managing to attract an audience of around 4,000. The format continued in 2014,[195] and since then, open-air cinema has become one of the more frequent cinema events in urban areas (mainly Jakarta and its suburban areas), as an alternative mode of cinema exhibition. Various organisations have begun to use the

---

[190] See the chapter 4 on In-Docs.

[191] Imanjaya. "The Cultural Traffic," 91.

[192] Eriek Taopik, "Yoyo Budiman, Generasi Terakhir Operator Layar Tancap" (Yoyo Budiman, The Last Generation of *Layar Tancap* Operator) in *Blog Bandung Ekspress*, accessed on 2 January 2018, http://bandungekspres.blogspot.co.uk/2010/04/yoyo-budiman-generasi-terakhir-operator.html. (My translation).

[193] Arisman Riyardi, "Serunya Nonton Layar Tancap Masa Kini" (The Excitement of Watching Contemporary *Layar Tancap*) in *Kompasiana*, 16 March 2017, accessed on 2 January 2018, https://www.kompasiana.com/riyardiarisman/serunya-nonton-layar-tancap-masa-kini_58ca0caed77a611e0af080d2. (My translation).

[194] Openaircinema.com, "Jakarta Indonesia: Outdoor Movies Open Air cinema Jakarta International Film Festival" in *Open Air Cinema*, 30 October 2008, accessed on 2 January 2018, https://openaircinema.us/blog/2008/jakarta-indonesia-outdoor-movies-open-air-cinema-jakarta-international-film-festival-indonesia.

[195] Mahardi Eka, "Jiffest Kembali Adakan Open Air Cinema" (Jiffest Run Open Air Cinema Again) in *Kapanlagi.com*, 4 December 2014, accessed on 2 January 2018, https://www.kapanlagi.com/showbiz/film/indonesia/jiffest-kembali-adakan-open-air-cinema-831bba.html. (My translation).

open-air cinema format to screen their films, such as Kineforum, the independent cinema club managed by The Jakarta Art Council.

I argue that the recent return of open-air cinema is different to the old style *layar tancap* for several reasons. First, these recent open-air cinema events are carefully programmed to cater for the taste of middle-class audiences, while the old style *layar tancap* was targeted at a lower class audience[196]. The recent open-air cinema events were organised by film community organisations such as JIFFest, Kineforum and BEKRAF (the Indonesian Creative Agency) that employ a professional programmer with experience in programming for film festivals, film clubs or other film-related events. The old *layar tancap* style mostly relied on the availability of films, rather than the exhibitors pro-actively acquiring them, and mostly became a place for the formation of alternative taste for B-movies as opposed to contemporary Indonesian quality films[197].

Second, the recent open-air cinema events are carefully staged as events with proper public relations, launched in shopping malls or other venues to attract middle-class visitors, while the old style *layar tancap* was a more organic event that occurred for people living in its vicinity, mostly taking place in suburban kampongs or villages as part of ceremonies such as weddings or circumcisions. The old style *layar tancap* also generated social prestige for the people who held the ceremony[198], while the recent open-air cinema is a more nostalgic cinema event in the open-air format,

---

[196] Imanjaya elaborated this argument in his thesis. See Imanjaya. "The Cultural Traffic," 78-97.

[197] *Ibid,* 92-94.

[198] *Ibid,* 80.

sometimes promoted to have 'alternative high-quality entertainment'[199]. In short, the old style *layar tancap* is more akin to a social event to gather people living in the neighbourhood to show off social pride—predominantly working class in focus. In contrast, the recent open-air cinema is more likely to be a middle-class phenomenon imbued with nostalgia and the notion of the preservation of cultural heritage.

In this context of open-air cinema culture, Watchdoc's open-air cinema has somewhat complicated the cinema culture (or subculture in Imanjaya's assertion) by taking place in unlikely premises (such as sites whose inhabitants have been recently evicted under the pretext of illegal occupation), with the documentary subjects sometimes becoming part of the audience. Watchdoc held an open-air cinema event when they produced *Belakang Hotel* (*Hotel's Backyard*), a documentary about the water crisis and the tourism industry in Yogyakarta[200]. The documentary was made in collaboration with local artists and activists based on news coverage about the local water crisis in Yogyakarta, followed by a solo art performance by a local artist as a protest against both the tourism policy and bad urban planning in the area.

The next open-air screening was *Yang Ketu7uh* (*The Seventh One*, 2014), a documentary about the people's voice in the presidential election of 2014. The film was screened in the front yard of Museum Fatahillah, one of the main museums in Jakarta, and attracted activists, students, and the general public[201]. A film producer,

---

[199] Donatus Fernanda Putra, "*Menghidupkan Lagi Romantisme Layar Tancap*" (To Revive the Romantics on *Layar Tancap*), in *CNN Indonesia*, accessed on 2 January 2018, https://www.cnnindonesia.com/hiburan/20141123180025-220-13278/menghidupkan-lagi-romantisme-layar-tancap/. (My translation).

[200] Souisa, interview, 2017.

[201] Agustinus Shindo Alpito, "Yang Ketu7uh, Mengemas Pilpres dengan Bumbu Kisah Kaum Proletar" (*The Seventh One*, Packaging the Presidential Election with the Story of Proletariat) in *MetroTVNews.com*, 16 August 2014, accessed on 2 January 2018,

Edwin Nazir, who attended the screening, suggested Watchdoc should talk to Cinema XXI group about the possibility of obtaining a theatrical release, as the Cinema XXI group includes a dedicated time slot for documentaries[202]. After discussing the issue with Catherine Keng, the corporate secretary of Cinema XXI, *Yang Ketu7uh* was screened in major cinema theatres in Indonesia in 2014[203]. This screening caused concern for Watchdoc, especially as the documentary was designed for broadcast, and not for the big screen with the latest projection technology[204]. The technical requirements specified by Cinema XXI, such as proper colour grading, were quite difficult for Watchdoc to fulfil because they did not have the same technical capacity. Thus, any more offers for movie theatre screenings would require careful consideration in the future[205].

Watchdoc open-air cinema started as an event for middle-class audiences in major cities such as Yogyakarta and Jakarta as part of a social movement inviting their networks to screenings and offering a distribution strategy. However, this changed when they produced a number of documentaries that garnered public attention, such as *Rayuan Pulau Palsu* (*Fake Island*) and most importantly *Jakarta Unfair*. *Rayuan Pulau Palsu* is a documentary about land reclamation in Jakarta in which Watchdoc takes a very critical position against the policy. The land reclamation project portrays fishermen in the coastal area of Jakarta losing their main source of income and livelihood, as the land reclamation project brings potentially greater damage to the

---

http://hiburan.metrotvnews.com/film/yKXMQr0N-yang-ketu7uh-mengemas-pilpres-dengan-bumbu-kisah-kaum-proletar. (My translation).

[202] Souisa, interview, 2017.

[203] *Ibid.*

[204] Laksono, interview, 2016.

[205] Souisa, interview, 2017.

environment. The film put Watchdoc in direct opposition to the then governor of Jakarta, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, also known as Ahok, as he insisted that the policy was never meant to displace the fishermen from the area[206]. Some avid critics of Ahok used this documentary to attack the governor's policy on land reclamation, thus politicising the documentary, as was evident from the comment made by M. Taufik, the head of the local parliament in open and hostile conflict against Ahok[207].

Rayuan Pulau Palsu was screened in the area where the affected fishermen live, in Muara Angke, North Jakarta on 30th April 2016[208]. The screening occurred through a different model of engagement to any of the old style *layar tancap* and the screening of *Yang Ketu7uh* at the Fatahillah Museum. Here, I would like to make a number of points regarding the open-air cinema event and film culture in Indonesia in general.

First, a writer-activist, Oki H. Wahab, compared the screening to the screening of Indonesian popular film, *Ada Apa dengan Cinta* or *AADC* (*What's Up with Love?*, directed by Rudi Soedjarwo, 2002)[209]. The screening of *AADC* was described as a

---

[206] Robertus Belarminus, "Ahok: Rancangan Kami Tidak Pernah Berniat Mengusir Nelayan" (Ahok: Our Design Is Not Intended to Evict Fishermen) in *Kompas.com*, 13 April 2017, accessed on 12 December 2017, http://megapolitan.kompas.com/read/2017/04/13/00231121/ahok.rancangan.kami.tidak.pernah.berniat.mengusir.nelayan. (My translation).

[207] Tempo.com, "M. Taufik Ajak Anggota DPRD DKI Nonton 'Rayuan Pulau Palsu" (M. Taufik Asks Members of Local Parliament to Watch 'The Fake Island') in *Tempo.co*, accessed on 13 December 2017, https://metro.tempo.co/read/773012/m-taufik-ajak-anggota-dprd-dki-nonton-rayuan-pulau-palsu. (My translation).

[208] Muslim AR, "Refleksi Rayuan Pulau Palsu di Kampung Nelayan" (Reflection of *The Fake Island* in Fishermen's Village) in *Liputan6*, accessed on 13 December 2017, http://citizen6.liputan6.com/read/2497971/refleksi-rayuan-pulau-palsu-di-kampung-nelayan. (My translation).

[209] Oki Hajiansyah Wahab, "Antara *AADC2* dan *Rayuan Pulau Palsu*" (Between AADC2 and The Fake Island), in *Nuwobalak.id*, accessed on 23 December 2017, http://nuwobalak.id/?p=284. (My translation).

coming-of-age event for its young audience of post-Soeharto Indonesians, especially as they had to queue for hours to buy tickets for this teenage drama. *AADC* and its sequel *AADC2* are considered an ultimate cinematic event where the audience were lured into the cinema to become involved in the on-screen romance of the famous couple[210]. The screening events for both *AADC* and *AADC2* (in movie theatres located in shopping malls) were compared to the screening of *Rayuan Pulau Palsu*, especially highlighting the lack of proper equipment and the immediacy of the screening of the latter to the site depicted in the film. Wahab's article made a romantic comparison between the experiences of both screenings. Such a comparison is somehow inevitable in relation to the cinema culture in Indonesia in general, as I have also received relatively similar comments through social media for posting my attendance at one of the Watchdoc screenings. Dandhy Laksono describes this screening of *Rayuan Pulau Palsu* on his Facebook page:

> They [the audience] waited for two hours because the screen was down due to strong wind. People climbed the mast, tied the screen on more strongly, and punched some holes on the screen [for the wind to go through]. The six by four metre screen was made by activists and volunteers and they sewed it themselves. The digital projector occasionally went off because it could not stand the heat. It was meant for indoors in an air-conditioned room. Then some people brought a fan to cool it down, but that didn't help. One of the local people took the initiative of borrowing a projector from the nearby shop, while some postgraduate students offered their help to borrow a projector from a nearby hotel.
>
> Then the rain drizzled. Some local people hastily found a plastic cover, not to cover the audience but the sound system. People were unmoved even when the drizzle got heavier. Soon after, a projector arrived. A local youth association group (*Karang Taruna*) lent it to us. Another projector came, this time from the postgrad students. Minutes later, we managed to screen the film[211].

---

[210] Wahab, "Antara AADC2".

[211] Dandhy Laksono Facebook post, 1 May 2016, https://www.facebook.com/dandhy.laksono/posts/10154109228593618.

Second, the screening of *Rayuan Pulau Palsu* in Muara Angke created different types of reaction than those at a screening in a movie theatre setting. These reactions—along with the material conditions described by Laksono—have become the part of the screening event that the documentary addresses. During the screening, the audience reacted directly to whatever was depicted on screen, cheering when statements regarding refusal of the land reclamation were mentioned, and booing whenever any 'antagonistic characters' (mostly public officials) appeared on screen[212].

What has come from this screening process is different from a distant appreciation where the audience focuses on the aesthetic experience. Rather, the engagement is more unruly, especially in comparison to cinema consumption in theatrical settings[213]. Collective responses for particular policies and political stances—especially when related directly to their lived experience—have been made through this documentary film screening. In this regard, documentary film screenings (plus the narrative and material conditions of the screening) have created their own type of publicness in comparison to other open-air cinema settings in Indonesian film culture. Miriam Hansen argues that the film watching habit in an orderly manner in a theatrical setting belongs to the middle class, and this became regulated once the film industry in America started to establish itself[214]. Contrary to that middle-class cinematic experience, Watchdoc screenings have shown affinity to alternative media

---

[212] See Wahab "Antara AADC2" and also Muslim AR "Refleksi". Also see the documentation of the screening in Muara Angke in this YouTube video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Er46lw1T3OA.

[213] Laksono, interview, 2016.

[214] Hansen, *Babel and Babylon*, 126.

circulation along the lines of Negt and Kluge's ideas, to provide a sphere that is different from the Habermasian bourgeois public sphere. These alternative media instigate a kind of experience in the socio-economic realm called a 'context of living,' which show a class position different to middle-class subjectivity for public opinion and political deliberation as in Habermasian public sphere model.

This model of open-air screening has been repeated by Watchdoc with *Jakarta Unfair*, the film about forced evictions from slum areas in Jakarta as part of the 'normalisation' of the river's embankment and city rejuvenation in general. This documentary was made in response to news about city planning[215]. Besides the evictions that had already happened in an area called Kampung Akuarium (the main story in *Rayuan Pulau Palsu*), a bigger eviction was planned to take place in the Bukit Duri area, Tjiliwung riverbank in South Jakarta[216]. The eviction was a part of city plan to reclaim the riverbank of Ciliwung River—the main river of Jakarta—from occupation by illegal inhabitants, especially to reduce the floods in Jakarta during the rainy season. The problem occurred when the inhabitants, who had been living there for decades, somehow received a type of legalisation from the local authority on their land title. There had already been some resistance in Bukit Duri where the local community, organised by activists, received help from a group of urbanists and architects to propose an alternative solution, rather than eviction[217]. After a partial eviction had taken place, they sued the Jakarta government, aiming to cancel the

---

[215] Souisa, interview, 2017.

[216] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[217] Callistasia Anggun Wijaya, "Bukti Duri Figure Denies Ahok's Claim about Kampung Susun" in *The Jakarta Post*, 30 September 2016, accessed on 13 December, 2017, http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2016/09/30/bukit-duri-figure-denies-ahoks-claim-about-kampung-susun.html.

eviction plan altogether and receive proper compensation for what had happened[218]. The courts heard the case and ruled in favour of the inhabitants, ordering the Governor to cease both the rejuvenation plan and the eviction plan accordingly. However, the governor of Jakarta disregarded the court order, insisting that the inhabitants were illegal and that the eviction would take place as planned[219]. In the newsroom, Watchdoc had predicted massive unrest would take place with the eviction, as Bukit Duri inhabitants had anticipated. When the eviction took place, surprisingly there was no clash and the inhabitants let it happen in an emotional way[220]. Watchdoc recorded the eviction process, with the footage being part of the documentary, *Jakarta Unfair*.

Jakarta Unfair had its world premiere in Bukit Duri, in the same place that the eviction had taken place a few days before. One of the co-directors, Dhuha Ramadhani—who attended the screening—described the emotions of Bukit Duri inhabitants as being similar to what happened in Muara Angke during the screening of *Rayuan Pulau Palsu*.

> In Bukit Duri, they shouted occasionally during the screening, especially condemning Ahok [the governor] this and that! Some even threw racist slurs against him. After the screening they also said similar things. The situation was very emotional[221].

---

[218] Bimo Wiwoho, "Warga Bukit Duri Menang, Pemprov DKI Wajib Bayar Ganti Rugi" (Bukit Duri Inhabitants Won, Jakarta Must Pay the Compensation) in *CNN Indonesia*, accessed on 15 December 2017, https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20171025214146-12-251123/warga-bukit-duri-menang-pemprov-dki-wajib-bayar-ganti-rugi. (My translation).

[219] Bimo Wiwoho, "Warga Bukit Duri".

[220] M. Ahsan Ridhoi, "Kepasrahan Warga Bukti Duri Jelang Penggusuran" (Bukit Duri Inhabitants are Helpless as the Eviction Imminent), *Tirto.id*, accessed 15 December 2017, https://tirto.id/kepasrahan-warga-bukit-duri-jelang-penggusuran-cski. (My translation).

[221] Dhuha Ramadhani, interview with the author, 14 August 2017.

Some other affected areas are also featured in *Jakarta Unfair*, including Kampung Akuarium in Pasar Ikan area, North Jakarta, and a screening was also held there. I attended this particular screening, as part of this PhD project. The account of the open-air screening presented here is based on my fieldwork notes.

The screening of *Jakarta Unfair* took place on 26th November 2016, the same time as the award night of the Festival Film Indonesia (FFI)[222] that year. I posted photos on my Instagram account. A friend of mine, an activist during the New Order era and now a film producer, made a remark in the comment section. She asked jokingly why I was in Kampung Akuarium rather than being at the FFI award night. The contrast between the red-carpet event of the FFI award night and watching a film sitting on the ground among the rubble tells a story of different kinds of publicness in relation to cinema culture in Indonesia. On one side, as a state-sanctioned festival (funded by state budget, run by a quasi-state institution mandated by the 2009 Film Law), the FFI stands for the aesthetic credibility of the cinematic award to assert public relevance of films beyond entertainment values. Conversely, the *Jakarta Unfair* screening relies on face-to-face publicness following a media event (the documentary film screening and its publicity) to build solidarity with the victims of eviction.

Kampung Akuarium is located near the centre of the Old City of Jakarta, and the inhabitants were evicted as part of the city rejuvenation programme. When I visited the location, the alleyway into the area was dark and there was no lighting on the streets. My taxi drove along the dirt road, as young people guarded the area sitting on their motorbikes. Some temporary shelters and tents had been erected in

---

[222] On FFI, see chapter on In-Docs.

the area, while in the distance some trucks, tractors, and excavators were parked. I entered the Kampong to see an empty field adjacent to a temporary mosque, where I assumed the screening would be held as the area is quite central. The announcement came shortly after the evening prayer (*salat isya*) through the mosque PA system. I was told by Laksono that the screening was scheduled for 8.00pm but it was not until after 8.15pm that I saw activities around the mosque. A giant plastic banner was unfolded and bamboo sticks were to be used as the masts. While some people were erecting the mast, the PA system in the mosque was still busy calling people to join the screening. Then the banner was spanned tightly in-between the mast, and then it was erected (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Erecting the mast for screening *Jakarta Unfair*

in Kampung Akuarium, 26th November 2016

By a little after 8.30pm, people had gathered in front of the screen. Prior to the screening, the master of ceremonies opened the event in a very informal manner mentioning there would be a short introduction by their leader Ibu Yani (Madame Yani) and then something from Watchdoc. The master of ceremonies thanked Watchdoc for making the film for them. Then Ibu Yani opened the screening by mentioning three points: first, she reminded the audience that the remaining inhabitants of Kampung Akuarium have already filed a lawsuit against the eviction and they need to organise themselves to follow up on the case. Second, Ibu Yani reminded the audience of evictions that had occurred in other areas, and they need to build solidarity with them. Third, she mentioned that some people close to the governor candidate Anies Baswedan, who competed against Ahok in the upcoming election, have already approached her to show support to the people in Kampung Akuarium.

The screening and the campaign period for the local election of Jakarta were not too far apart, and the narrative of the eviction became one of the most contentious topics in both the televised debate and in other media. *Jakarta Unfair* and its narrative have been frequently quoted, including in the official televised debate[223], where it was mentioned by an opposition candidate along with the narrative about forced eviction in Jakarta. Used particularly to attack the incumbent about his policy that discriminates against the poor[224], it was then followed by a promise to avoid eviction upon election as governor.

---

[223] This is noted in the sequel to *Jakarta Unfair*, entitled *Jakarta Unfair: Epilogue*. Watchdoc, "Jakarta Unfair: Epilogue" in Watchdoc Documentary, 19 April 2017, accessed 2 January 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uu7V6xEHmmc.

[224] Watchdoc, *Jakarta Unfair: Epilogue.*

The film was also used by the opposition candidates to gain sympathy from the voters by screening it in a celebratory manner in a *nobar*[225]. *Nobar* is an acronym for '*nonton bareng'*, which literally means 'watching (a film) together'. But more than watching a film in a matter-of-fact manner (as would usually happen in a movie theatre or open-air cinema), a *nobar* is a staged event designed for specific social, cultural, or political purposes. As a political event, a *nobar* is sometimes conducted to show support to both the filmmakers and the discourse of the film. The *nobar* is an example of how the platform is never neutral but is instead political from the first instance.

Figure 2

Children at the screening of *Jakarta Unfair*

Kampung Akuarium, Jakarta, 26th November 2016

[225] Gibran Maulana Ibrahim, "Agus Yudhoyono Nonton Film tentang Penggusuran Bersama Warga" (Agus Yudhoyono Watches Film About Eviction with Citizens) in *Detik.com*, accessed 12 December 2018, https://news.detik.com/berita/3384835/agus-yudhoyono-nonton-film-tentang-penggusuran-bersama-warga. (My translation).

The use of *Jakarta Unfair* in a *nobar* for the opposition candidate indirectly involved Watchdoc in electoral politics in Jakarta. The documentary narrative that attacks the incumbent's policy has resulted in Watchdoc being attacked by the incumbent's supporters for siding with the opposition candidate, especially Anies Baswedan[226]. This complicates Watchdoc's position, as Baswedan was strongly supported by Islamist groups, who later in the course of the election campaign demanded Ahok be jailed with allegations of blasphemy[227], totally counter to the position of Watchdoc as a secular organisation who construct their documentary narrative around the UN Bill of Rights. This matter with Ahok is considered an

[226] Laksono, *Interview*, 2017.

[227] On this matter, see for example Charlotte Setjiadi, "Ahok's Downfall and the Rise of Islamist Populism in Indonesia" in *Perspective* (Singapore: ISEAS –Yusof Ishak Institute Analyse Current Events*)*, No. 38, 8 June 2017.

important point in the development of democracy, with an Indonesian scholar commenting on it as a setback for democracy and deepening of illiberalism[228].

Returning to the screening in Kampung Akuarium, the co-director of *Jakarta Unfair*, Dhuha Ramadhani, also attended the screening. He brought the hard disk that stored the film and provided the laptop and projector for the screening. In conversation with me, he said that his main task was to guarantee that the screening took place smoothly (he would be operating the laptop and the projector). Then the master of ceremonies asked Ramadhani to give a speech after Ibu Yani. Ramadhani, a soft-spoken student with a ponytail, spoke a few sentences, thanked the organiser, and addressed the audience, hoping they would enjoy the show.

---

[228] Vedi Hadiz, "Indonesia's Year of Democratic Setbacks: Towards a New Phase of Deepening Illiberalism?" in *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, 53, no. 3, 2017.

Figure 3

Laptop, hard disk and projector for screening *Jakarta Unfair*

Kampung Akuarium, Jakarta, 26th November 2016

Shortly before the screening, the audience anticipated some form of entertainment when one of the audience members jokingly said that Rano Karno (a famous TV-soap-actor-turned-politician) would be on screen. As the documentary progressed, the mood changed and the audience went quiet. As mentioned, the *Jakarta Unfair* storyline is based on several cases of eviction in Jakarta, following some people from the evicted areas. It then moves on to the bigger picture of land reclamation, and how city planning sides with the interests of the big corporation, Agung Podomoro Group, who gained the concession to manage the land after reclamation. Altogether, this series of evictions is told as part of the gentrification of the city, whilst the poor are discriminated against by being removed to low-class apartments, dozens of kilometres away from their original homes[229].

One of the subjects featured in *Jakarta Unfair* is the story of the eviction of an inhabitant of Kampung Akuarium. Somehow, this created a positive response as the audience cheered and shouted, 'Hey look, a movie star' (referring to seeing the person they know well on screen), followed by a burst of laughter. Somewhat different to the sense of identification with a movie star—where the audience can identify themselves in the context of socio-economic aspiration—this familiarity comes from the feeling of belonging within a shared space, and solidarity as fellow victims of government policy. This was shown by greetings of sympathy when the scene became more emotional as the person described how the eviction took place in his kampong, affecting him through his loss of livelihood, yet despite this he decided to stay in the kampong.

---

[229] Jakarta Unfair is available in Watchdoc YouTube Channel https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y0g0SJBFmJo

The mood once again became tense when the documentary moved on to the then Jakarta Governor, Ahok, explaining the necessity to vacate the areas because of the interest of the public. This elicited some audience members to shout, '*Cina! Mampus!*' (Chinese! Die), exclaiming racist slurs against Ahok. However, an authoritative voice immediately intervened by saying, 'Hey, no need for that!'[230], which I recognised as the voice of Ibu Yani. Afterwards, no single racist slur or expression of anger came from the audience until the end of the screening.

The screening then closed with a simple address, again by Ibu Yani stating the need to gather at the regular meeting place to prepare what they have to do regarding the next court hearing. The crowd then dismissed themselves and the area became vacant again, with the masts removed and the screen folded.

Jakarta Unfair and Watchdoc open-air screening is very important with regards to documentary film culture, especially related to training and workshops. *Jakarta Unfair* was produced by students undertaking their internships at Watchdoc[231]. The directorial credit fell to two of those students: Sindy Anastasia and Dhuha Ramadhani who had never made any films before. Ramadhani even jokingly said he was appointed one of the co-directors because he was wearing a t-shirt with 'Director' printed on the front[232]. The production process is an open process where the crew (starting with 20 students and reduced to 13 during the project) freely

---

[230] "*Ga usah gitu lah!*" Fieldwork note.

[231] Dhuha Ramadhani, interview, 2017. Also see Sindy Febriyani and Dhuha Ramadhani, "Jakarta Unfair: Berita-berita di media tidak tepat", interviewed by Wisnu Prasetya Utomo (Jakarta Unfair: News in the media is inaccurate). *Remotivi*, 26 Januari 2017, accessed 15 December 2018, http://www.remotivi.or.id/wawancara/432/Jakarta-Unfair:-Berita-Berita-Penggusuran-di-Media-Tidak-Tepat. (My translation).

[232] Ramadhani, interview, 2017.

discussed and brainstormed the idea. In this regard, Watchdoc's Dandhy Laksono supervised the process, maintaining the footage quality and advising for the entire process, while all the recording processes were done by the students[233].

Interestingly, even from the production process, *Jakarta Unfair* does not only 'speak to the converted', as some of the students who made this film originally opposed the idea of criticising the policy, genuinely believing that the eviction was necessary to improve the city for the public[234]. The co-director Anastasia was also against the idea of criticising the policy[235]. However, after brainstorming and a lengthy discussion, all the crew agreed that the documentary must be made, as the policy was considered unjust and discriminatory against the poor, with the pretext of legality[236]. The documentary, born out of a collective process, was the result of training and internship, with participants adding their own resources during the process. Followed by the Jakarta election, the trial of Ahok, and the rise of Islamic populism in Indonesia, this documentary might represent Krishna Sen's assertion that 'the media has been the site of every momentous transition in Indonesia'[237].

The impact of *Jakarta Unfair* on Watchdoc as an institution has been immense. As mentioned before, the documentary was quoted in a televised debate during the campaign period in the Jakarta election. The supporters of the opposition, including an Islamic political party *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* (PKS, Justice and Prosperity Party), conducted a *nobar* for *Jakarta Unfair* because of the criticism

---

[233] *Ibid.*

[234] *Ibid.* Also Febriyani and Ramadhani, "Jakarta Unfair".

[235] Ramadhani, interview, 2017.

[236] *Ibid.*

[237] Krishna Sen, "Introduction: Re-forming Media," 1.

against the incumbent Ahok[238]. Laksono stated that after *Jakarta Unfair* he received many sympathetic mentions on his Twitter account, which he assumes come from members of Islamic groups. He used the opportunity to 'propagate' other Watchdoc agenda issues such as Papua, or LGBT[239].

The impact has not always been favourable, as Watchdoc lost support from Ahok's followers, who have a strong social media presence[240]. When Watchdoc released *Yang Ketu7uh*, they received endorsements on Twitter from famous celebrities with huge numbers of followers, such as the singer Glenn Fredly (@GlennFredly, 2.5 million followers), Olga Lydia (@OlgaLy_DIA, 162,000 followers) and Sophia Latjuba (@sophialatjuba88, over 50,000 followers). However, after *Jakarta Unfair*, these accounts stopped endorsing Watchdoc documentaries[241]. Another important impact is the direct allegation that Watchdoc received money from the opposition candidates for making the documentary[242]. Watchdoc was also alleged to be partisan in this election because their proposal was rejected by Ahok during his tenure, and Watchdoc have approached the opposition for a number of projects if the opposition candidate is elected as governor[243]. Laksono maintains that allegation is not true. In this situation the reason for not taking funding from third sector (either transnational or governmental) organisations and the firewall principle

---

[238] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[239] *Ibid.*

[240] *Ibid.*

[241] *Ibid.*

[242] *Ibid.*

[243] *Ibid.*

have proven fruitful, because the allegations are not proven and Watchdoc believe that their credibility remains intact despite the heavy attack directed toward them[244].

Another institutional impact of *Jakarta Unfair* is the shift in perception about Watchdoc, which has further affected them through loss of clients[245]. *Jakarta Unfair* was made after Watchdoc had lost their main source of revenue in the period of 2014 to 2015 when Kompas TV, Bloomberg TV, and Geotimes stopped commissioning Watchdoc for documentaries. After *Jakarta Unfair,* Watchdoc had to survive on their savings and serving small clients. When I interviewed Laksono in mid-2017, Watchdoc had just reduced their office size in half because they could no longer afford to pay the rent.

Aside from the institutional impact, Laksono claims the screening of *Jakarta Unfair* has brought a significant impact to the subjects in impacted areas[246]. The screening of *Jakarta Unfair* in Kampung Dadap, the-would-be-evicted area in Banten Province has managed to bring the inhabitants together to resist the eviction. Laksono claimed that before the screening, there were some inhabitants who believed the eviction would bring them a better livelihood, but after the screening the inhabitants agreed to resist the eviction unanimously[247]. Rather than 'talking to the converted', the documentary managed to link the experience of the documentary subjects to the viewers' consideration of their own living context that resulted in resistance against government policy.

---

[244] *Ibid.*

[245] Ibid.

[246] *Ibid.*

[247] *Ibid.*

To understand this documentary and its screening practice, it is important to see the images and narrative in the architecture of circulation. The open-air Watchdoc screening and the *nobar* from the opposition candidate have shown how platforms are not neutral; similar images might be encoded differently in their circulation, and the address might also be affected. The Watchdoc screening of *Jakarta Unfair* provides an example of site-specificity and materiality in the screening that added to how the documentaries are perceived and how engagements are generated. The narrative managed to produce a counterpublic sphere, especially related to the representation of eviction in Jakarta (and other cities in Indonesia), which is described formally as '*relokasi*' (relocation), a euphemism, instead of '*penggusuran*' (eviction) which has a more political connotation[248]. *Jakarta Unfair* was made with the exact idea of providing the counter to the *relokasi* narrative in the mainstream media, especially as the media has been seriously tainted with class bias in covering topics related to eviction[249].

This narrative is part of the transformative role of media that Hansen and Negt and Kluge talk about, where media enables the repressed subjectivity to organise the experience around the context of living, which is based on experience, to produce a 'social horizon' [250]. In this discursive practice, the 'proletariat' are enabled to understand themselves in their class position[251]. On the contrary, the bourgeois

---

[248] Febriyani and Ramadhani, "Jakarta Unfair".

[249] Evi Mariani Sofian, "Bias Kelas dalam Liputan Gusuran" (Class Biases in Reportage on Eviction) in *Remotivi* 15 February 2018, accessed 13 December 2018, http://www.remotivi.or.id/di-balik-layar/464/Bias-Kelas-dalam-Liputan-Gusuran. (My translation).

[250] *Ibid*, 12.

[251] *Ibid*, 12.

media championed by Habermas as the element to form the public sphere are not interested in providing narratives such as those made and screened by Watchdoc, and therefore these alternative media step forward to expose the 'relationality' within the class structure, making the daily experience of the kampong inhabitants into the fabric of their socio-economic awareness.

However, analysis of this documentary should not only rely on the narrative, as the spatial aspect of the documentary, that is the site-specific exhibition and viewing practices, have provided observations of actual places (where the subjects and audiences live). Hansen argues for the importance of the circumstances -- the temporal and spatial aspects of the exhibition and reception that are able to create new and critical possibilities for public life -- rather than discourse alone. Similar to the idea of 'architecture of circulation', site-specific screenings will have an effect on the viewer, enabling them to imagine other urban politics[252]. Non-theatrical screening in non-sanctioned cinema venues enabled marginalised people within the city setting to have their own space for organisation. This creation of the space in which the media event takes place would allow marginalised people to 'organise their experience based on their own context of living'[253]. More than just counterpublic in the abstract term of discourse, the screening has enabled another possibility of publicness, which is the affectual public[254] based on the physical space of the

---

[252] Geraldine Pratt and Rose Marie San Juan, *Film and Urban Space: Critical Possibilities*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 143.

[253] Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film*. (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1991), 108.

[254] Papacharissi, *Affective Public*. 25

screening. The circulatory aspect and its materiality, as described above in Laksono's Facebook note, (drizzle and rain, problems with the projector, plastic cover) and in my own fieldwork note (the bamboo mast, screen reused from giant plastic banner, trucks and bulldozers nearby) has generated a particular response to part of the address of the documentary. The material conditions of the screening also might generate feelings and sentiment, which could contribute to an alternative to the official narrative of eviction as the way out from poverty and economic hardship[255].

Watchdoc also learned from the material conditions of the screening, as Laksono said that they had to adjust their filmmaking practices following what they learned from the screenings in these open-air settings[256]. During the screening they realised that the documentary had to compete with uninvited noises (such as ice cream sellers passing by with their bells, and motorbikes), distractions, lighting conditions, and other material conditions that they did not consider during production. After *Jakarta Unfair*, Laksono provided new production standards such as: recording super clear sound, making short rather than long takes, using attractive, contrasting colours to make graphics clearly readable, and cutting short moments of reflection to keep the audience interested in story[257]. Laksono emphasised that these material conditions have affected the way he makes documentaries, as he did not realise when he started Watchdoc as a production house that it was meant to service

---

[255] See Ian Wilson, Out of the rubble: Jakarta's poor and displaced seek a vehicle for their voice" in *Indonesia at Melbourne*, 4 October 2016, accessed on 17th December 2018, http://indonesiaatmelbourne.unimelb.edu.au/out-of-the-rubble-jakartas-poor-and-displaced-seek-a-vehicle-for-their-voice/.

[256] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[257] *Ibid.*

broadcasters. He believes the challenges for Watchdoc documentaries are in those issues rather than getting the best aesthetic appreciation from the audience[258].

This discussion has focused on how an open-air screening of Watchdoc films has defied the middle-class open-air screening and generated a different type of publicness, which is affectual engagement in an urban setting. Watchdoc documentary and its screenings have produced affectual engagement, a pre-subjective or liminal nature of engagement open to various possibilities[259], which are not particularly discussed in Habermasian public sphere nor Negt and Kluge's proletarian public sphere. An affective public has been formed through affectual and emotional engagement, responding to the media narrative (as shown by cheers, laughter and exclamations against the film's 'antagonist' in the screening of *Jakarta Unfair*). However, it can also go beyond that. As argued by Papacharissi, this engagement can help sustain movements that "might yield political impact of a particular form, like a regime reversal, a call for elections, or a shift in the balance of power that may produce further legislative, social, economic, and cultural changes[260]". This is not to say that the defeat of Ahok in the governor election happened because of the screening of *Jakarta Unfair*, but this affectual public that emerges from the socio-political conditions indicates a different type of publicness than what has been discussed in previous chapters. As Papacharissi argues, such affectual engagement can go various ways[261], including to instigate illiberal responses towards the socio-political conditions as shown by the massive rally against Ahok at

---

[258] *Ibid.*

[259] Papacharissi, *Affective Publics,* 131

[260] Papacharissi, *Affective Publics,* 132.

[261] Papacharissi, *Affective Publics,* 131

the end of 2016. In this event, hundreds of thousands – some claim millions – of people gathered in National Monument Square demanding Ahok to be imprisoned because of blasphemous remarks in one of his public meetings. This rally is not particularly related to Watchdoc films or their screening, but this event shows how affectual engagement can lead into a different type of congregation altogether.

However, in the case of Watchdoc, the narrative and the material aspects of the documentary screening have become the way documentary addresses the viewers and opened possibilities of alternative urban politics for the poor. In this way, Watchdoc has asserted their position as part of a social movement in Indonesia. The next section will discuss Watchdoc as a social movement that interplays the local and the global, as they brought their documentaries as part of protest actions against a big corporation in Europe. One of their documentaries has managed to draw a direct link between a small sub-district of Kendeng in Pati, Central Java and the city of Heidelberg in Germany.

Indonesia as imagined abroad

This section deals with a question regarding the imagination of Indonesia in documentary film both within and outside Indonesia. One series that is considered important in documentary filmmaking in Indonesia is the *Anak Seribu Pulau* series aired in 1996 on 6 TV stations across the country[262]. This series was meant to provide a multicultural portrayal of children in Indonesia, as opposed to an idealised, homogenous portrayal of children that had been promoted by the New Order. The

[262] See above.

series managed to build an imagination of multicultural Indonesia, but in a depoliticised manner, and it tended to exoticise 'other' ethnic groups and their common activities. This self-exoticisation is considered contentious, as it represents the effort of the New Order regime to translate national unity into an attempt to subdue different ethnic groups in the regions as part of the centralised national culture decided by Jakarta[263]. There is an act of 'foreigning' in this narrative, imagining Indonesia as if presented for the eyes of foreign visitors;[264] not problematising ethnic differences, but implying a false sense of multiculturalism[265].

I would like to contrast this portrayal of Indonesia as a beautiful and peaceful nation with the Watchdoc documentary series, *Indonesia Biru* (*Blue Indonesia*), which offers a portrayal of areas within Indonesia in a politicised manner, presented as an imagination of local, national, and even global problems. This comparison is made because the *Indonesia Biru* series came out of travels around Indonesia in a special project to record issues related economic, social, and cultural rights outside the big cities of Indonesia[266]. The multicultural space is also performed on screen in *Indonesia Biru*, but it is done in a politicised manner. This series, and the screening of an episode from the series, is analysed as another possibility of documentary culture and the notion of publicness in relation to Watchdoc as part of a social movement, with their action performed on a very different scale.

---

[263] Sen and Hill, *Media, Culture and Politics,* 111.

[264] Barkin, "The Foreigning Gaze", 356.

[265] Ugoran Prasad and Intan Paramaditha, "Performing multicultural space" 156.

[266] Laksono, interview, 2017.

Indonesia Biru depicts a travel expedition filmed by Dandhy Laksono and a video journalist Ucok Suparta Arz, using motorbikes travelling around Indonesia. The journey is a challenge in itself, because Indonesia is an archipelago with around 16,000 islands (five of which are major islands) spreading as wide as Europe. The journey commenced on 1 January 2015 and ended on 31 December 2015, with the start and finish line at the Watchdoc offices in Bekasi[267]. This expedition was inspired by another expedition—*Zamrud Khatulistiwa* (*The Emerald of the Equator*)—completed by journalist Farid Gaban and Muhammad Yusuf, also on motorbikes[268]. Laksono said the content for *Indonesia Biru* was inspired by an environmentalist and economist Gunther Pauli, who proposed the blue economy instead of the green economy, to find a solution to fossil fuel use whilst creating sustainability in human development and environmental sustainability, together with economic, social, and cultural rights. These are the main subjects covered during the journey[269].

The expedition arose when Watchdoc was at its low financial point after losing its large clients. Watchdoc then used their savings to pay for the travel, giving the pair an assignment to produce stock footage as well as a few documentaries during the trip[270]. Rather than waiting for a big contract to replace the lost earnings, both Laksono and Kurniawan believe that this method is more suitable to their mission to produce documentaries, as they believed many stories would emerge from the

---

[267] Gilang Galiartha, "Ekspedisi Indonesia Biru Tuntas di Bekasi" (Indonesia Biru Expedition Finished in Bekasi), in *Antaranews.com*, 31 December 2015, accessed on 21 December 2017, https://www.antaranews.com/berita/537687/ekspedisi-indonesia-biru-tuntas-di-bekasi. (My Translation).

[268] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[269] *Ibid.*

[270] *Ibid.*

expedition and they could at least sell the footage to broadcasters or anyone interested[271]. This effort seems to have paid off, with several strong documentaries being developed as a result. During the expedition, Watchdoc managed to gather enough material to produce short and long format documentaries such as *Samin versus Semen*, *Kala Benoa*, *The Mahuzes* and *Asymmetric*.

Until 2017 when I interviewed Laksono, *Indonesia Biru* had not made any proper financial return, as the plan to sell it to TV stations as a package of 20-minute episodes had not proven successful[272]. One TV station was interested in buying the series. However, because they wanted to retain the rights for life, Watchdoc refused to sell. Their previous bad experience with *Jalan Pedang* served as a deterrent[273]. Following the expedition, Watchdoc has produced 35 short documentaries (with a duration between 6 and 20 minutes each) and six longer format documentaries (between 40 and 90 minutes each)[274].

As a travelogue series, I would like to compare *Indonesia Biru* to *Anak Seribu Pulau*, as both series depict the livelihoods of people in the areas far from Jakarta as the centre of the Indonesian economy and politics. The *Indonesia Biru* series mostly tells stories about local alternative economic systems, off-the-grid energy sufficiency of the locals, and other alternatives against mainstream, socio-economic views and systems. Further, it highlights tensions and resistance against central government plans for development, such as *The Mahuzes* that portrays the traditional method of

---

[271] *Ibid.*

[272] *Ibid.*

[273] Kurniawan, interview, 2016; Laksono, interview, 2017.

[274] See the complete products in *Indonesia Biru* website, http://www.indonesiabiru.com/

food sustainability within a tribe in Merauke, Papua, contrasted with the plan of the current President Jokowi to produce 1.2 million hectares of paddy fields.

The portrayal of these ethnic tribes is not self-exoticised in the same way as *Anak Seribu Pulau*. Instead, *Indonesia Biru* imagines the subjects involved in local economic initiatives in their own living contexts, while in the far backdrop the state is advancing economic development for big corporations. The subjects become camera-worthy based on the imagination of the country full of hidden tensions, rather than on the merit of being a member of another ethnic tribe carrying out their practices. In this case, the 'foreigning' process does not happen, as documentary makers do not essentialise unique cultural characteristics as if they were to be presented to foreign visitors. Rather, *Indonesia Biru* has managed to provide an alternative imagination to the centralised characteristics of Indonesian culture and at the same time shows the tension between the centralised model of economy and energy management against local initiatives.

Besides an alternative imagination to foreigning, the *Indonesia Biru* expedition has also produced documentaries that present civil resistance against social injustices and government policies that are damaging to the environment and harming people's livelihood. An important title in this category is *Samin versus Semen*, a story about the resistance of the Samin community against the provincial government of Central Java and a multinational cement company, whose factory development plant would potentially endanger the environment and livelihood of this community in the surrounding areas. *Samin versus Semen* will be discussed particularly because of its role in expanding the concept of publicness and the public beyond national boundaries.

Samin versus Semen tells a story about a farming community called Sedulur Sikep (known also as the Samin community in Central Java). According to this documentary, the Samin community has a long history of passive resistance against authority, dating back to the Dutch era. The Samin are known for their refusal to pay tax to the Dutch administration during the colonial era, and they reject some aspects of modern life, such as modern education. This community live as farmers, and employ many creative ways to support their life, such as generating energy using cows' manure.

The Samin community is considered an 'indigenous' community in Indonesia, as the Samin are an ethnic tribe and an unofficial religion in Indonesia. This has other implications, in that members of the Samin community must declare they are the follower of one of the six state-sanctioned religions (Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, or Confucianism) if they wish to apply for an identity card. Because many members of the Samin community refuse to do so, they are refused identity cards and thus become disfranchised[275]. For Laksono this background makes the story more appealing especially due to the keywords: indigenous people against a multinational corporation[276].

The documentary focuses on two main characters among the Samin community, a sister and brother, Gunarti and Gunretno, who led the protest against the cement company's plan to build a cement factory in the karst area. They argue that the karst area is the water reservoir needed by the farmers in the surrounding

---

[275] On the Samin Movement, see: Victor T. King, "Some Observations on the Samin Movement of North-Central Java: Suggestions for the Theoretical Analysis of the Dynamics of Rural Unrest" *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Deel*, 129, No. 4 (1973): 457-481.

[276] Laksono, interview, 2017.

districts, including themselves, if they wish to continue farming, which has been their main source of living for generations. If the cement factory is built in the karst area (known as the Kendeng karst area), their fertile farming ground will be destroyed, and their livelihood will be endangered. Therefore, Gunarti and Gunretno, along with some other Samin community members, organised a protest—including road blocking and demonstrations—against the cement factory.

The resistance against the cement company became a national issue when these farmers, dubbed as the 'Kendeng Farmers', staged two protests by sitting down in front of the State Palace and burying their feet in cement[277]. The main argument from the farmers to stop the development of the factory is based on the environmental feasibility studies (*Analisa Dampak Lingkungan* or AMDAL) that were mandated for the project. The AMDAL concluded that the project would endanger the environment and recommended the project be stopped altogether. The farmers sued the provincial government at the state administration court, based on maladministration of the permit letter that has given the green light to the project. The court ruled in favour of the farmers, cancelling the provincial government permit[278]. Rather than stopping the project, the provincial government issued another revised permit letter, and therefore the project continued.

---

[277] Marguerite Afra Sapiie, "Kendeng Farmers Refuse to Halt Protest Against Cement Factory" in *The Jakarta Post*, 18 March 2017, accessed on 18 December 2017, http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/03/18/kendeng-farmers-refuse-to-halt-protests-against-cement-factory.html.

[278] News Desk, "Supreme Court Ruling on Construction of Kendeng Cement Factory must be Obeyed" in *The Jakarta Post*, 24 March 2017, accessed on 18 December 2017, http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/03/24/supreme-court-ruling-on-construction-of-kendeng-cement-factory-must-be-obeyed.html.

The farmers' protest was quite dramatic. All women, they buried their feet in cement mix and sat in a chair for five consecutive days in front of the State Palace. The protest attracted solidarity from around one hundred activists. These activists continued the action by replacing the farmers with the same action[279]. In other areas outside Jakarta, other activists also staged similar protests as their support to the farmers[280]. The protest ended when the Presidential chief of staff office head, a renowned former anti-corruption activist during the New Order era, Teten Masduki, met the protesters and promised that the presidential office would review the case[281]. Shortly after cementing their feet, one of the farmers, Patmi, died, and activists and the media put more pressure on the president[282]. The project halted briefly, but it did not stop altogether as the provincial government had already issued a new permit for the project. The president later stated that the issue of this cement company is the purview of the provincial government, and not his concern[283]. As of September 2018, the project was still going and the farmers of Kendeng continued to

---

[279] The Jakarta Post, "Anti-cement Plant Rally Goes on After Farmer's Death" in *The Jakarta Post*, 22 March 2017, accessed on 18 December 2017, http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/03/22/anti-cement-plant-rally-goes-on-after-farmers-death.html.

[280] Tha Jakart Post, "Snowballing Support for Kendeng Resident" in *The Jakarta Post*, 20 March 2017, accessed on 18 December 2017, http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/03/20/snowballing-support-for-kendeng-residents.html.

[281] News Desk "Anti-cement rally goes on".

[282] Ihsanuddin, "*Seorang Petani Kendeng Meninggal Dunia, Ini Respons Jokowi*" (A Kendeng farmer has died and this is Jokowi's response). In *Kompas.com*, 31st March 2017, accessed on 17 December 2018, https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2017/03/21/14484471/seorang.petani.kendeng.meninggal.dunia.ini.respons.jokowi. (My translation).

[283] Bimo Wiwoho, "*Jokowi Diminta Gunakan Hak Prerogatif Soal Semen Kendeng*" (Jokowi Was Asked to Use His Prerogative Right for Semen Kendeng), in *CNN Indonesia*, accessed on 18th December 2018, https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20170324201525-20-202663/jokowi-diminta-gunakan-hak-prerogatif-soal-semen-kendeng. (My translation).

protest against the government and demand that the court decision to stop the cement factory altogether be upheld[284].

In the context of this protest, *Samin versus Semen* plays an important role in bringing the case forward, performing the protest with the farmers and other activists who support the case. A German activist and academic who studied in Indonesia, Anett Keller, invited *Samin versus Semen* to a roadshow in Germany, after discovering that the documentary featured a German multinational company, Heidelberg[285]. Keller lived in Yogyakarta for her research and Laksono knew her during her residency in Indonesia. Keller organised the screening in Germany, providing volunteers to provide German subtitles for the film and contacting activists and other institutions interested in screening the film. The Green Party of Germany were even interested in joining the campaign when they found out a German multinational corporation was implicated[286]. The road show was then conducted in ten cities in Germany: Köln, Göttingen, Hamburg, Bremen, Münster, Berlin, Heidelberg, Leipzig, Greifswald, and Freiburg[287].

Laksono came to Germany to accompany Gunarti. The roadshow was conducted when Heidelberg (the cement company) was holding their shareholder meeting. Some German activists then staged a protest in front of the corporation

---

[284] Atik Soraya, "*Ibu-ibu Petani Kendeng Tagih Penuntasan Kasus Pabrik Semen*" (Women of Kendeng Demand the Solution for Cement Factory). *Tirto.id*, 26h September 108, accessed on 17 December 2018, https://tirto.id/ibu-ibu-petani-kendeng-tagih-penuntasan-kasus-pabrik-semen-c2XC. (My translation).

[285] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[286] *Ibid.*

[287] Purwaningsih and Setiawan "Samin versus Semen Diputar di 10 Kota di Jerman" (Samin versus Semen screened in 10 cities in Germany), in *DW*, 2 May 2017, accessed 14 December 2018, https://www.dw.com/id/samin-vs-semen-diputar-di-10-kota-di-jerman/a-38652664. (My translation).

building, cementing their feet, and sitting for six hours in the square near the Heidelberg office, on the day the shareholder meeting took place. The protest in Heidelberg involved activists from the Green Party, academics, Antifa, and the punk community[288].

Laksono considered this roadshow to be a success, as the CEO of Heidelberg came out of the meeting to greet Gunarti in person and made a promise that he would personally review the company's policy in Indonesia[289]. According to Laksono who translated for Gunarti from English to Bahasa Indonesia, the CEO had said that he comes from a family of conservationists who keep a forest near his hometown for environmental reasons, a reason behind him making the promise. Gunarti and her fight against Heidelberg was profiled in a half-page story of the German newspaper, *Der Spiegel*[290]. During my interview, around six months after the protest, Laksono said the activities of the cement company in Kendeng area had stopped even though he was not really sure if the halt was permanent[291]. The role of *Samin versus Semen* in this campaign had been important, as the screening had always been the main event to gather and organise activists[292].

This case with *Samin versus Semen* has provided an avenue to explore another possibility of documentary film culture in Indonesia born out of the international network. For organisations such as In-Docs, the international film festival has

---

[288] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[289] *Ibid.*

[290] *Ibid.*

[291] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[292] *Ibid*. According to Laksono the documentary was the reason for him to go to Germany, because otherwise he preferred to stay in Jakarta to finish six other documentaries that have already been planned from the *Indonesia Biru* series.

provided some individuals with resources and conditions that enable them to be cultural brokers, expanding their knowledge into an organisation and then seeking funding for their own projects, creating their own festival, and creating their audience to open the space for their media practices. As for FFD, the role of the stakeholders at every level (local, national and global), have helped the festival and the organisation behind it to develop and grow. These institutions within the third sector of non-profit organisations behind the global cultural network are key to the growth of FFD as a community-based film festival to provide a counterpublic sphere against the mainstream cinema culture.

Watchdoc have a very different link to international organisations, mainly established with actors within a global social movement to perform protests against a multi-national corporation that operates at the local level in Indonesia. According to Laksono, the case of the Samin as an indigenous and disfranchised group versus one of the biggest cement companies in the world is an ideal arrangement for staging a protest in one of the major countries in Europe[293]. The tour of *Samin Versus Semen* transformed the idea of the public sphere as the arena for decision-making and resistance into a global setting. Marjorie Mayo has pointed out that global solidarity with a social movement such as this one has been a common trait that can be found after the protest meeting in Seattle in 1999[294]. This global social movement has complicated the idea of national civil society as the building block for the public sphere, especially as the impact of international financial organisations have travelled

---

[293] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[294] Marjorie Mayo, *Global Citizens: Social Movements and the Challenge of Globalization* (London: Zed Books, 2005), 3.

beyond any national borders and global solidarity has transformed the way that policy is influenced.

Conclusion

Based on what I have elaborated, here are some points related to publicness and debates about the public concerning Watchdoc Documentary Maker First, the institutional format of Watchdoc as a private institution has triggered a question on whether documentary films should be linked with their institutional format,[295] especially considering the friction that the organisation has to endure against its circumstances. Friction is the force that shapes and is being shaped by the path of global connectivity; it has been proven to produce particular gestures and images and, in the case of In-Docs, this friction has produced a 'service organisation' that works among the interests of philanthropists, NGOs, local filmmakers, and international networks of festivals and cultural brokers. In the case of FFD, the festival has managed to produce a counterpublic sphere against the backdrop of mainstream media circulation, positing themselves as stakeholders in a global cultural industry network. As for Watchdoc, the institutional format has enabled them to work as part of a social movement that works with other actors according to their needs. This position has also enabled them to jump into a debate about public interest in a confrontational manner with political actors.

Second, in the context of cinema culture in Indonesia, Watchdoc have also pioneered the non-middle class nature of the cinema event, especially compared to

---

[295] Meg McLagan, "Imagining impact", 310.

exhibition formats that have a relatively similar nature. Whilst open-air cinema has returned as part of middle-class nostalgia, Watchdoc screenings through their own model of '*layar tancap*' have shown different traits that are closer to the experience of the underprivileged in their living contexts. Their screenings have also had an emotional impact and feelings are expressed during the screening, opening up the possibility of the formation of a public based on sentiment and passion, if not an affective public. The material conditions have also affected the documentary address as they produced certain emphases and even bodily reactions amongst the viewers, which might also mobilise emotions as part of the engagement.

Third, on imagining the nation in relation to the global public, Watchdoc has brought another possibility of public deliberation, as they place the transnational public as part of the pressuring factor in the decision-making process at the national and even local levels. Watchdoc's advocacy has become part of the global social movement and this has happened in site-specific situations (such as in front of the Heidelberg office) where performance can influence policy directly. Watchdoc, as part of a social movement, works with a different public altogether, expanding their cause beyond film culture and using documentaries as a platform for influencing the policy-making process. In this regard, the narratives and distribution method (touring Germany as part of activism) provided by Watchdoc have avoided essentialising Indonesian cultures as if they were to be presented for the 'foreign' public. Instead, Indonesia as the subject of the documentaries always occurs in particular tensions, either social, political, cultural, or the ramifications of those notions.

Chapter 7
Conclusion

Through this thesis, I have argued that the rise of documentary film culture has emerged together with different types of publicness in the post-authoritarian setting in Indonesia after the 1998 political change. Publicness refers to conditions and values where the formation of a political subject as well as wider political engagement are made possible by the narratives and institutions of documentary film. This argument is grounded in an examination of documentary film culture defined as the scrutiny of documentary film narrative as 'practice that is embedded in the spatial and psychological context of social hierarchy and distinction'[1]. Documentary film culture examined in this thesis is multi-faceted; in the sense that one set of practices is not being treated as exclusively different to another. Even though the investigation has been conducted within three different organisations, this does not mean that one different type of culture is attributed to each organisation (even though some patterns might emerge along with the institutional format of the organisation). However, culture—as a framework for my investigation—is more like an open process involving the aesthetic and the institutional formats from which it arises. Rather than one being exclusive from another, documentary film culture overlaps and intersects among these organisations, also entangled with their surroundings.

Three documentary film organisations have been examined to obtain insights on documentary film culture in Indonesia. This has enabled the mapping out of the

[1] Janet Harbord, *Film Culture*, 2

position of each within the socio-cultural formation of Indonesia, especially after the massive political change in 1998 (known colloquially as '*Reformasi*'). The historical contexts from which these organisations emerged (and have been able to maintain their operation) are included, enabling an examination of the historical juncture that occurred at the time of massive regime change, from 1998 and beyond. This period is crucial in determining the developing openness within the media environment due to abrupt regime change.

Because my research approaches documentary as a 'mode of production, network of funding, filming, postproduction, and exhibition tendencies' [2] the development of documentary film culture is linked to the institutional formats of the organisations. It was evident that these organisations have been relying on collaboration with their stakeholders, a network of local and global non-profit sector parties (or 'third sector' which is distinct and separate from the state and the market) all of whom have interests in seeing documentary film culture proliferate[3] as part of the narrative on democracy and civic engagement.

These stakeholders include local and global non-profit organisations such as NGOs, philanthropic and charitable organisations, and cultural centres. International institutions in the non-profit sector have played a significant role in providing resources, such as funding for programmes, access to documentary films, and free screening venues. Further, they have been crucial in supporting the link between organisations within film communities and civil society groups at large that work towards building institutions for public engagement. The supports from these

[2] Arthur, "Extreme Makeover," 20.

[3] Rhyne, "Film Festival Circuits," 135.

stakeholders also enable the documentary film culture in Indonesia to grow without proper commercial backing and lack of infrastructures such as public broadcasting system or state funding. These stakeholders' supports also maintain the non-commercial character of documentary film in Indonesia in general and provide the ground for a counterpublic to form against mainstream film industry and the documentary film culture of the New Order Indonesia.

My project is grounded in the assumption that the openness that occurred after Indonesia's political change brought documentary film into new array of different roles. During the New Order regime, documentary films had generally been regarded as part of state propaganda, or at best as 'travelogue', showcasing ethnic groups living in remote areas presented as 'the other' in national broadcast programming. Placing a centralised conception of national culture—based in Jakarta[4]—as the linchpin of Indonesian culture at large, documentary films worked as part of a self-othering apparatus, to establish national culture as the centre of a nation-building project.

The fall of the New Order in 1998 was an important starting point because the regime was no longer able to impose such roles for documentary films. The absence of the regime has enabled new possibilities for the growth of different documentary film cultures. However, at the same time these new cultures have arguably contributed to the fall of the regime, because the demand to open dialogue and develop new media practices began even before the regime downfall. Technological developments have pushed practices of recording and distributing media located

[4] Sen and Hill. *Media, Culture*, 110-111.

outside the regime's official film culture, which has resulted in questions about censorship and other controlling apparatuses[5]. The closed-ness of media culture in Indonesia cannot be maintained. Thus, the drive for dialogue through media has grown stronger, creating moments that push regime change.

After the regime change, the documentary film culture in Indonesia has managed to produce a variety of publicness from contesting the state's domination of public sphere in the transition period, counterpublic to the national cinema culture and the formation of public based on emotion and sentiment as part of class-based experience of socio-economic settings for urban poor. In a more general situation, the documentary film culture in contemporary Indonesia has formed the audiences who are more ready to be engaged to social and political issues foregrounded by certain documentary films. Through social and politically engaged documentaries and documentary festival programming, a 'witnessing public' has been created, the type of public that are ready to be engaged, and involved, in socio-political actions based on 'testimony' and 'civic skills' that are brought by the documentary narratives in specific institutional settings. This type of audiences is different from the type of engagement that was expected by documentary film culture during the New Order.

This thesis has gone further to examine organisations in documentary film to gain insights on the way these changes occurred, focusing on three key examples: In-Docs (Indonesian Documentary Film Centre), FFD (Festival Film Dokumenter) Yogyakarta, and Watchdoc Documentary Makers. The examination of the transformation of

---

[5] Camille Deprez and Judith Pernin. "Introduction," in *Post-1990 Documentary Reconfiguring Independence* (eds.) Camille Deprez and Judith Pernin (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 1-2.

documentary film culture and reflection on the emergence of publicness are summarised below.

In the chapter on In-Docs, the transition of documentary culture in Indonesia—mainly from the use of documentary as propaganda, public instruction, and travelogue during the New Order into an attempt to produce documentary as a particular media format with distinctive artistic values—has been demonstrated. During the New Order, the effort to assert the artistic values of documentaries had been signposted by a small movement among the film students at IKJ, but it was not until the rise of Garin Nugoho in the early 1990s that public attention to this format was established. This paved the way for other documentary filmmakers to promote artistic documentaries to the public, with a new culture in documentary film having developed since. During the same period, In-Docs and its parent organisation YMMFI provided exhibition platforms, through the Jakarta International film festival (JIFFest) and regular screenings (Screendocs), for artistic documentaries that played a significant role in the way documentary films have been perceived by the general public. Against the backdrop of the newly found openness in post-authoritarian Indonesia, this perception has been utilised by In-Docs to provide workshops for documentary filmmakers.

These workshops have played an important role in discovering and nurturing new talents in documentary filmmaking in Indonesia. More than just a series of training events, the workshops also provide funding and assistance for productions, enabling filmmakers to produce their films. However, most importantly, I have illustrated how the documentary film workshops have changed public perceptions of documentary film culture on many levels. For filmmakers, these workshops are the most

reasonable method of producing their films, as they provide funding, skills, and other necessary resources needed in the absence of infrastructure support for documentary filmmaking. For critics and programmers, there has been a perception that the workshops have reproduced the 'New Order visual culture' that self-exoticised marginalised people for the viewing of the dominant culture. One critic even worries that the 'workshop film' would deter novice and aspiring filmmakers from exploring the format, as this institutional model and its aesthetics are considered the only way to make documentary film[6]. This view has encapsulated the interaction of aesthetics and institutions of documentary film, where the possibilities of artistic exploration have been made possible within the limits of the organisational format. For the organisations involved, the workshops have enabled them to work within the narrative of democratisation in a post-authoritarian setting, telling the untold stories of marginalised people, providing education of civic culture and producing socially and politically engaged documentaries. These workshops have enabled one of the most repressed forms of media under the New Order to become part of public culture rather than as state's unidirectional communication vehicle. Considering what has been done by *The Act of Killing* – to raise awareness of the state apparatus on the political potentials of documentary film to shake established views – documentary film workshops and In-Docs (and JIFFest) activities in film exhibition have already established such awareness in the audience and filmmakers side. Moreover, the development of new talent in documentary filmmaking is also regarded an achievement, considering the absence of open and accountable systems for development of media practitioners (including filmmakers) outside commercial

[6] Irawanto, "Beyond Big Dramatic Moment," 118

media organisations. The non-profit format of organisations such as In-Docs has provided justification for claiming that the workshop benefits the public in general.

The institutional format of organisations such as In-Docs is another important point that this thesis demonstrates. The NGO format, pioneered by Garin Nurgroho, has proven to be the most suitable format to work on production, circulation, and the general support of documentary film because of its affinity with the narrative of democracy, citizen participation, and civic engagement in a post-authoritarian setting. The fact that the NGO format is considered suitable could not be separated from the perception of the role of NGOs during the New Order and the transition era, where it has been equated with opposition and counterbalance against both the authoritarian regime and any political forces who try to shut down the newfound openness.

The position of In-Docs and FFD as NGOs benefits from the idea that equates NGOs with civil society, as perceived by donor organisations since the 1990s in Indonesia[7]. Since the late 1980s, the political features of civil society have been somewhat dysfunctional due to strict state control of political institutions and political parties. This was because of severe internal conflicts, making them ineffective as opposition to the government. In this situation, NGOs rose as a form of proto-opposition in the early 1990s and thus as the political opposition to the state[8]. However, from the mid-1990s, NGOs—especially those based in major cities—have been accused by politically oriented activists of 'becoming the extended arm and implementing agencies of the authoritarian government and had lost their

[7] Antlöv, Ibrahim, and van Tuijl, "NGO Governance and Accountability, 150.

[8] *Ibid*, 149.

commitment towards change'[9]. Therefore, the public accountability of NGOs has been questioned, as most do not work under proper supervision. In addition, they were accused of being 'free-floating', whereby many NGOs have demonstrated 'detachment from the everyday reality of common people'[10]. This criticism then has been addressed, with some NGOs producing and implementing their own code of ethics and adopting more advocacy programmes[11]. This situation has led to the separation of NGOs and the more radical and politicised social movements, which is the subject of my investigation concerning Watchdoc in another part of this thesis.

Thus far, it is safe to argue that organisations such as In-Docs work in a Habermasian public sphere where they assume the totality of the public sphere and production of documentary film is considered a particular media format (with its communicative capacity) that will push for institutionalisation of democracy in post-authoritarian Indonesia. In-Docs, like filmmakers and other organisations in post-1998 Indonesia, managed to build links to the NGO communities in the late 1990s when international donor agencies, philanthropic organisations, transnational NGOs, and other international non-profit organisations needed partners for the promotion of civil society as a sphere separate from the state and the market and working to provide the counterbalance needed in democracy. The role of working with NGOs in a series of campaigns to guard the political transition from violence has been developing as the film communities need to express their own concerns on social and political issues as part of a 'scenario of experiment'. This means using the

[9] *Ibid*, 150.

[10] *Ibid*, 156.

[11] *Ibid.*

opportunities in the newly opened media sphere to seek their own funding, conduct their own festivals, and develop their own audiences[12].

However, the assumption that the public sphere would result in civic engagement is challenged by the criticism against the 'workshop film' that epitomised the way In-Docs works. The engagement with documentary when distributed through a bigger platform (such as national television) has resulted in the underlining of inspirational messages, where individual action is portrayed as the remedy for what are assumed to be national problems. The concerns regarding superficiality and the lack of critical engagement might have strong grounds, considering the narrative of democracy foregrounded for these activities to take place at all. Thus, the publicness that has been formed with this documentary culture has been limited to the safe area of the national broadcast.

This has become relatively consistent since In-Docs has been able to expand its workshops and other activities to support documentary film at the regional level. Based on the pre-existing transnational network established by one of the In-Docs partners—the Goethe Institute in Jakarta—In-Docs can use this network with the potential to work on similar programmes for a larger public. The collaboration that has emerged from this network thus far has been limited to the production of images and discourses that suit the existing industry and mainstream view within the realm of the non-profit organisations. There have been some more radical possibilities, for example from the Freedom Film Institute of Malaysia that offered a social movement

[12] Paramaditha, "The Wild Child's Desire," 24-26.

network, or from the Bophana Centre in Cambodia that might link others to the experience of dealing with overcoming national trauma caused by past massacre.

The chapter about FFD presented an example of a film institution that has grown from the bottom up, starting as a series of regular documentary film screenings in a student hall accompanied by public talks and discussions about the subject matter, and technical issues in the filmmaking. This grassroots community group has developed into the biggest and longest-running documentary film festival in Southeast Asia. The drive to combine documentary aesthetics and the issues of the documentaries has been the crux of FFD and this has been maintained with post-screening talks for almost every film. These talks become an important platform for film communities and civil society organisations to share concerns and push forward documentary film as medium for advocating causes. Here, FFD becomes an ephemeral public space; it produces particularly transient public spaces to foreground certain issues to the public. However, a variety of publics emerges from this. Whilst FFD has been occupied with audiences that are politically engaged, the viewers are 'ready to testify' based on their concerns about the conditions of the real world[13]. Another type of audience has emerged from the festival; people with a special interest such as filmmakers, students, and cinephiles who are mostly attracted to documentary aesthetics more than the actual issues. This has shown the variety of documentary film culture, which on one hand belongs to the NGO communities who use it for campaigning and activism and on the other hand FFD who have been trying to explore new possibilities and innovative forms of documentary film-making.

[13] Torchin, "Networked for advocacy," 2-3.

However, FFD has challenged a more established cinema culture in Indonesia, especially considering the tension between Jakarta—as the centre of the cinema industry—and smaller cities such as Yogyakarta. Yogyakarta has been posited in contention with the dominance of Jakarta[14] and the existence of FFD (and other festivals in Yogyakarta such as JAFF) has provided an alternative to the 'national culture' that had been promoted by the New Order regime on several levels. Thus, FFD has challenged Jakarta as the centre for documentary film culture, or even as the centre of national film culture, as part of the inter-cities competition that sometimes occurs between film festivals[15]. This competition occurs particularly within the business discourse because FFD have maximised the presence of the stakeholders in the 'third sector' from where it obtains films and screening venues, and it maintains the entire profile of the festival as part of the local and global non-profit cultural network. This has been juxtaposed with the profile of Jakarta, where film culture comes together with the global film industry and links with international film circuits. Festivals such as JIFFest, regardless of the connection to the non-profit sector, are still seen as part of the commercial film industry, and also as being used as the launch pad for arthouse films that they have screened. This happens because some films are distributed later in the commercial cinemas in Indonesia through the commercial wing belonging to the JIFFest's initiator. In-Docs, as a separate organisation, does not directly gain any benefit from this business arrangement, but when it is placed within the bigger cinema culture it complicates its position as a non-profit organisation that works on a non-profit basis. In this situation, FFD as a film festival can be considered

[14] Suwarto, Annisa, Saputro and Habibi, *Mapping Filmmakers*, 2.

[15] Harbord, *Film Culture*, 60.

an arena for the formation of what has been asserted by Cindy Wong as a counter-public to the mainstream cinema culture that spreads the discourse of a large and glamorous film business and celebrity culture[16].

Another important challenge for FFD to Jakarta as the centre should be seen in the context of the post-authoritarian setting where the remnants of the narrative of national cinema culture has been imagined to overshadow the position of a provincial city such as Yogyakarta. National culture is generally considered a production of images to mobilise support for the state agenda on national development[17]. This culture is no longer the dominant culture and many alternatives that used to be supressed have grown from many directions. However, the idea of the Jakarta-based national cinema culture is still imagined as a hegemonic dominant culture that needs to be challenged by film communities that grow from the bottom up. The festival then grows as a challenge to the imagined national culture, especially to assert an alternative discourse to this dominant culture. However, FFD at the same time has been enabled by the much-imagined culture that it challenges. Moreover, it has also been supported by the availability of the global connection emerging from any differences. This messy interaction is where the festival could be considered the site of friction; where the global connection is seen as awkward, unequal, and unstable, and from there culture is continually co-produced[18].

An examination of FFD's characteristics demonstrates how the festival has managed to form itself as a counterpublic. It has been able to challenge the national

---

[16] Wong. *Film Festivals,* 161.

[17] Sen and Hill. *Media, Culture*, 110.

[18] Tsing, *Friction*, 5.

cinema culture that grows out of the commercial film industry and the idea of unified national culture centred in capital city of Jakarta. In line with what In-Docs has produced, the domestic and global non-profit cultural network has provided an avenue for this counterpublic to be formed. The circulation of alternative images and discourses through the festival and its public talks has provided the arena for counter-discourses and counterpublics to emerge. However, FFD could be considered a grassroots film community who have been nurturing images and operating within this counterpublic since the beginning, amongst what Fraser calls plural and competing publics,[19] rather than working within the imagination of a totality of a unitary public sphere that it needs to occupy. The FFD, as a transient public space, functions as a parallel arena for the production and circulation of parallel counter-discourse to formulate oppositional 'interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs'.[20]

The counterpublic has also emerged in my chapter on Watchdoc. Watchdoc as an organisation originates in the tradition of TV journalism, which is more familiar with the idea of Habermasian public spheres for instigating and expanding public debate to influence public policy, based on formation and pressure from public opinion. This familiarity has made Watchdoc work with broadcasters, as it believes in the possibility of national television to form public opinion in the unitary totality of an overarching public sphere. Therefore, rather than taking a non-profit organisational format, Watchdoc decided to form as a private company to fund their documentaries and then let the mainstream media be the platform for the discourse it wants to circulate. Watchdoc regards this as an 'occupying' method, where it sees television and its

[19] Fraser, "Rethinking Public Sphere," 123.

[20] *Ibid*, 124.

function in circulating discourse as a 'public domain' or *ranah publik*[21]. This view is not new in Indonesia, as Edwin Jurriens has also noted a relatively similar view is held by some communication scholars of the University of Indonesia[22].

Jurriens asserted the possibility of maintaining this idea of publicness, regardless of the funding source. The scholars he observed in his research have already asserted an idea of the public sphere as:

> …a 'public space' (*ruang publik*) independent from the economic system and the state, where members of the public conduct rational discussions, formulate their opinions and monitor the government[23].

Furthermore, the idea of a public sphere as a space independent from the economic system and the state is maintained through the existence of the media supervisory body that represents the public interest. This has generated a complication regarding separation of the market, the state, and the civil society. The view that equates of NGOs to civil society as the main building block for democracy is being complicated somewhat in post-authoritarian Indonesia.

It is important to note that this view that equates of NGOs to civil society as the main building block for democracy has been foregrounded to defend the position of public media in Indonesia, the state-owned television (TVRI), and state-owned radio (RRI), to take funding from non-state sources such as, and especially from, foreign NGOs and aid agencies[24]. Therefore, this presents a very different strand of thought than Watchdoc, who posit themselves as part of a social movement whilst taking

---

[21] Laksono, interview, 2016.

[22] Jurriens, *From Monologue*, 25-42.

[23] *Ibid*, 25.

[24] *Ibid*, 26.

funding from the private sector. This approach subsidises their activities in criticising neoliberal governments and big corporations, as well as advocating for people's rights based on the ideas from UN's Bills of Human Rights. The Watchdoc organisational format has become an important factor in the debate about the Indonesian public sphere, as it shows that commercial entities are able to produce documentaries to form criticism against the authority.

In the case of Watchdoc, separation from the market does not totally happen, because they use the market mechanism to get funding and then subsidise their non-commercial documentaries for public education and advocacy. However, the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) is not suitable to define Watchdoc activities because the original intention of Watchdoc was to provide documentaries for public education and advocacy. Should Watchdoc follow CSR logic—from the company giving back to society based on its discretion[25]—it would at once stop activities that jeopardise its core business. Therefore, Watchdoc should be understood as an alternative media organisation, which works with a hybrid model, a combination of commercial production house and social movement, to generate counterpublics independently from the state, whilst collaborating with the non-profit sector.

Within this conception of alternative media, Watchdoc is the first to be established and operate in this institutional format. It has experienced a new possibility of advancing its public agenda whilst maintaining its format as a private company, by separating the 'original documentaries' (politically-engaged

[25] See the definition of corporate social responsibility in Archie B. Carroll "A History of Corporate Social *Responsibility: Concepts and Practices," in The Oxford Handbook of Corporate Social Responsibility*, (eds.) Andrew Crane, Abigail McWilliams, Dirk Matten, Jeremy Moon & Donald Siegel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 19-46.

documentaries) and 'commercial works' that were made based on commissions (which can sometimes also be politically-engaged). The logic of this separation comes from the principles of separation of editorial and advertorial in a rigorous fashion. This principle, it is believed, would enable commercial media, if this strict journalistic code is maintained, and would not fall into the trap of 'yellow journalism', much lamented by Habermas. For Watchdoc, this logic has been proven successful with the examples of the media under the New Order authoritarian regime, where they can counterbalance the authority whilst maintaining their business interests as commercial entities[26].

In doing so, Watchdoc has become a hybrid organisation, applying a separation of the editorial and the advertorial. This has enabled Watchdoc to make public some issues whilst maintaining their impartiality in their public appearance. However, this path has not always been stable because of a heavy reliance on personal networks that later resulted in a weakening of their financial situation, because commercial options became fewer. Through their original documentaries, Watchdoc managed to gain trust from NGOs, labour unions, student associations, and other actors in social movements, then building alliances with these non-profit organisations. This has complicated the non-profit logic of NGOs, especially for NGOs such as In-Docs and other Jakarta-based organisations such as SET, discussed in Chapter 4 about In-Docs. Organisations such as In-Docs or SET are established and operate within the non-profit premise. However, they use this for generating funding from the stakeholders in the non-profit sector, which directly or indirectly benefits their sister organisations operating on a commercial basis. Watchdoc works from a contradictory position

[26] Laksono, interview, 2016.

where they are established and operating as a commercial entity, but dedicating its profit for its non-profit sector. This has brought them financial difficulties. Further, it emphasises Watchdoc's position as an actor in social movements pursuing social transformation regardless of its organisational form. Operating through this principle, Watchdoc produces documentaries to provide the trajectory of this social transformation as it imagines it.

Watchdoc's documentaries have simple aesthetics and straight-to-the-point messages. This has enabled its documentaries to become part of advocacy campaigns against particular government policies that are considered to breach the economic, social, and cultural rights of the people. It has become common for Watchdoc documentaries to be part of public debate on particular public policy or advocacy issues in social movements. The old role of documentary film to promote established views and garner popular support for economic development has been replaced by its role to make enquiries into the human and ecological sacrifices for economic development policies that have been carried out by the state and big corporations. The victims of the neoliberal economy and the loss of social infrastructure have been made public by Watchdoc through their documentaries and screening events.

In this regard, Watchdoc's work is not just based on the general openness of the public sphere, whilst expecting any kind of engagement with its documentaries as enough to create change or influence public policy. Rather, documentaries are made with a critical engagement in mind. Watchdoc has a particular idea of making its documentaries in a closed-narrative manner where the background story, explanation of issues, conflict developments, and possibility of solution are depicted

in the entire documentary[27]. This approach is based on an assumption about the lack of infrastructure of knowledge in Indonesia. In this view, Watchdoc imagines that the audience does not have enough resources—time, sources of information, media knowledge—to find additional knowledge from what they see in the documentary; therefore, everything should be provided therein.[28] The audience imagined by Watchdoc is a lower and working class audience whose resources have been spent on basic needs. This instigates an idea of a proletarian public sphere as argued by Negt and Kluge, which could be found in alternative media. For Negt and Kluge, these alternative media are able to produce different models of subjectivity based on the experience of socio-economic relations to resist the hegemonic model of bourgeois subjectivity[29]. The alternative media in the proletarian public sphere work to provide an emancipatory function for the working class to break from bourgeois social arrangements, including those where the Habermasian public sphere is located[30].

Watchdoc documentaries fall into the category of instructional documentaries to provide clear instructions on political stance and possibilities of political action that can be achieved as the solution provided in the plot. This has been the typical format for documentaries produced by NGOs during the transition and after *reformasi*. However, the circulation of this documentary outside the traditional platform of television, movie theatre, or meeting hall (the latter has been the regular screening platform for NGO documentaries) has generated a different type of engagement,

---

[27] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[28] Laksono, interview, 2017.

[29] Negt and Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience*, 28.

[30] *Ibid.*

where the feelings and sentiment are circulated by the public. This happens particularly in the Watchdoc open-air cinema platform.

Non-theatrical screenings have been used by various organisations as an alternative method of film exhibition for various purposes, including for entertainment. However, Watchdoc have strengthened a tradition of screening documentary films as part of resistance or solidarity building with people affected by government policies. Working with NGOs, civil society organisations, student associations, or trade unions, the screenings have become a platform for making public certain issues that are critical to neoliberal government policies, as well as criticisms against big corporations and their operation. Sometimes, combined with the occupation of physical space and staged actions, the screenings have produced a space for the proletarian public to be created. Watchdoc has brought its documentaries to the working class to form a subjectivity based on their context of living, which is the departure from the bourgeois public sphere, based on their own experience of socio-economic relations.

However, the Watchdoc exhibition platform has demonstrated an important characteristic of the documentary film culture that has grown out of the narrative as well as the material conditions of circulation. In my observations of Watchdoc documentaries, Belinda Smaill's assertion about the possibility of documentaries making emotions circulate in the public sphere was utilised[31]. This occurs especially when the documentaries are circulated in the site impacted directly by a particularly harsh government policy. The 'architecture of circulation,' where the documentary

[31] Smaill, *The Documentary*, 3.

narratives are embedded in the material condition of its exhibition platform, has proven that platform is not neutral. Moreover, it has enabled sentiment and emotion to be expressed in the public sphere as part of solidarity building in social movements.

The way these feelings circulate through the public echoes the notion of 'public feeling' coined by Ann Cvetkovich, which is useful to argue about the position of feeling as part of a socio-cultural arrangement, rather than merely in the realm of medical or psychological studies. This public feeling is evident in trauma but also in the more obscure setting of the everyday, which usually happens because of a structural form of violence[32]. This structural violence has created trauma and other mental problems that have been stigmatised, and to avoid this situation Cvetkovich argues that publicness legitimates those feelings when they are circulated in the public sphere[33].

Watchdoc has conducted screenings of their documentaries in newly evicted areas, most of the time with inhabitants who fight back, not wanting to be removed. Screenings of Watchdoc documentaries in these newly evicted areas can record this structural violence that results from neoliberal policies. These screenings also provide a channel for feelings to be part of the public sphere from which debates about eviction then emerge in different platforms such as newspaper and television. As I note in the Watchdoc chapter, the material conditions have influenced this formation of public feelings more than in a form of consolation or commemoration. The documentary narrative of *Jakarta Unfair* and the material conditions of the screening

[32] Cvetkovich, "Public Feelings," 464.

[33] *Ibid*, 459-467.

have enabled the emergence of a possibility to imagine an alternative urban planning to counter the narrative of eviction, which is born out of the neoliberal logic of urban policy.

Finally, another important finding regarding the three organisations is the way they are influenced by friction in global connections. As already mentioned, In-Docs and FFD have been connected to the global non-profit cultural network where they are able to benefit from and contribute to the development of documentary film culture in Indonesia. This has been an important point to prove that documentary film culture has never happened in an insular manner in the confinement of the nation state of Indonesia; rather it has always been in interplay with other actors at various levels: local, national, and global. For In-Docs and FFD the imagination of this global connection happens within the realm of the media sphere, especially the space of documentary film narratives and practices.

The role of cultural broker has been very important for In-Docs for this global connection, as it has been influenced by its sister organisation, JIFFest, an international film festival attended by international guests and conducted in upper-class movie theatres in the centre of the capital city. From this international organisation, In-Docs has managed to find its ground and develop into a separate organisation to explore the documentary film within a global network of both the film industry and the non-profit cultural network. From this, meetings and workshops have been conducted (for example at good hotels in the centre of the capital city) as an acknowledgement of the cosmopolitan lifestyle of its documentary film culture. This has been the public appearance that In-Docs has maintained, to assert their position as a hub for regional and transnational documentary film development.

In FFD, this global connection has taken a different form, mostly related to the situation where it employs a different scale (local, national, or global) to consider its position in different circumstances, which sometimes happens to activist groups in Indonesia[34]. In its attempt to maintain its existence within the range of possible resources, FFD has employed this scale-making as a creative process. It has used the idea of a local organisation as a pretext to assert its position against the national and centralised cinema culture, and at the same time to assert its independent position. However, on a more practical level, this idea of local sustainability within a provincial city has been supported and shaped by international filmmakers, programmers, and film organisations, including Jakarta-based film activists and film communities. This is where the institutional form of FFD becomes the site of friction for the idea of spatiality in the context of competition among cities, as well as for its position as a stakeholder in a global cultural network. The festival—as a transient public space that has been formed by the set of practices and discourse—must be maintained by FFD through this set of practical encounters: to obtain films, to provide themes and speakers, to provide screening venues, and other film festival-related activities. This could not be done without the interplay of the local, national, and global, which has taken place in friction—unequal, awkward, and unbalanced—rather than in smooth and neat connections.

The interplay of local, national, and global is different for Watchdoc, as it has brought another dimension of global connections with public screenings in Germany to influence a policy that should be conducted at the provincial level by the Central Java Provincial Government. The scale-making in this regard is not for a creativity in

[34] Corby, "It's Not Just About the Film," 184.

opening up space for documentary film culture to grow, rather it is based on the imagination of the global public, in which public opinion can be formed and decision making could be achieved beyond the local and national vicinity. Watchdoc also employs scale making in staging the local in the global and returns to defend the local communities from a multinational corporation. This notion of changing scales has been employed regularly by global social movements, especially to push for the global public sphere that is expected to provide a counterbalance to the neoliberal economy.

Further study

The development of contemporary documentary film cultures in Indonesia has reached a point that is totally different than the New Order era. The derogatory term of 'plague films' or *film pes* to call documentary films is no longer exist because the state is no longer producing documentary films to promote an orchestrated attempt to lure the public to support national economic developmet. On the other hand, as I have shown in this tehsis, civil society groups have been active in producing, distributing, exhibiting and discussing about documentary films in an unprecented level in Indonesia. Considering the lack of infrastructure of documentary films in Indonesia, these efforts by civil society and advocacy groups have replaced what have been done by the public broadcasting system (and TV and cinema industry) in countries such as United Kingdom, Canada or The United States. It is through the civil society efforts, the documentary film culture in Indonesia has grown into this level.

However, some further study could be done more in term of documentary film culture in Indonesia. One of them is the potentials of experimentation and the assertion of documentary films as part of the intellectual culture during the New Order regime. I touched this issue in passing in my discussion about Sinema 8 of Jakarta Art Institute and David Albert Peransi who have promoted the position of documentary films (together with experimental, short films and raw footage) in producing different type of aesthetic engagement for their audiences. This study might open the possibility of looking at the potentials of film culture in producing resistance against the New Order regime. Rather than seeing New Order visual regime as an overarching and omnipresent during their reign, an observation to this type societal and creative force might enable us to look at society and artists are not always in monolithic position under an authoritarian regime such as the Soeharto's New Order, and this might rewrite the history of the media, especially film, in New Order Indonesia.

The second possibility of further study is the place of Islam as one of the most potent, and currently, most active societal and political force in Indonesia, and this cannot be avoided whenever talked about politics and the political in Indonesia. I touched the subject of Islam in passing, especially in the chapter regarding Watchdoc. During the screening of *Jakarta Unfair* I attended, the temporary mosque in Kampung Akuarium was used as the meeting point and its PA system was used to call the residents of the Kampung to gather for the screening. This scene is not something unfamiliar to happen in Indonesia as mosque has been known for its social functions. What is interesting here is the bigger picture involving the role of Islamic groups in local elections in Jakarta where conservative Muslims managed to mobilise hundreds

of thousands of people to demand imprisonment of the incumbent governor, Ahok, with accusations of insulting Islam during the campaign[35]. This mobilisation became a serious movement where the conservative Muslims have gained political momentum and became more visible in a country that used to be run in a secular fashion[36], making an Indonesian scholar call it a setback to the hard-won democracy of *Reformasi*.

Watchdoc is barely taking any role in this movement as it is a secular organisation. But the fact that its documentaries are being used as tools to attack Ahok and as a medium for mobilising people is a sign of the flexibility of these conservative groups in using any narrative for their political objectives. Beittinger-Lee has already flagged this situation up in her book about the existence of this illiberal group who use the strategy of civil society groups to push their undemocratic agenda[37]. The political situation that brings these Islamic conservative groups into existence has been studied by many experts specialised in Indonesia. However, the intersection of conservative Muslims and documentary film culture and cinema in general have not been explored thoroughly. Thus far, Alicia Izharuddin has discussed the construction of gender in 'Islamic films' in Indonesia in her book[38]. Ariel Heryanto includes an analysis of Islamic film as part of recent development of 'screen culture'

---

35 BBC News, "Mass Prayer Rally in Jakarta Against Governor 'Ahok'", *BBC Indonesia*, 2 December 2016, accessed 17 December 2018, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-38178764.

36 Yenny Kwok, "Conservative Islam Has Scored a Disquieting Victory in Indonesia's Normally Secular Politics", *Time*, 20 April 2017, accessed 18 December 2018, http://time.com/4747709/indonesia-jakarta-election-governor-islam-christianity-ahok-anies/

37 Beittinger-Lee, *(Un)civil Society*, 60.

38 Alicia Izharuddin, *Gender and Islam in Indonesian Cinema*, (Singapore: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017).

as part of the formation of identity in Indonesia[39]. Both scholars write with a concern about the rise of didacticism in the film narrative, which is related to conservatism in the expression of Islam in Indonesia. However, study regarding the use of documentary as pedagogical tool or film as popular entertainment over the longer term, including films released in the New Order era, remains absent from serious study. A thorough examination of Islamic film culture – including the study of narrative and practice of film as part of Islamic teachings – might give an insight into one of the most potent political forces in Indonesia.

[39] Ariel Heryanto, *Identity and Pleasure the Politics of Indonesian Screen Culture* (Singapore: NUS, 2014).

Bibliography

Antlöv, Hans, Derick W. Brinkerhoff, and Elke Rapp. "Civil Society Capacity Building for Democratic Reform: Experience and Lessons from Indonesia." *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*21, no. 3 (2010): 417-39. doi:10.1007/s11266-010-9140-x.

Antlöv, Hans, Rustam Ibrahim, and Peter van Tuijl. "NGO Governance and Accountability in Indonesia: Challenges in a Newly Democratizing Country." in *NGO Accountability: Politics, Principles and Innovation,* edited by Lisa Jordan and Peter van Tuijl, 147-163. London: Earthscan, 2006.

Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition: A Study of the Central Dilemmas Facing Modern Man*. New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959.

Ariani, Permata PI. "*Melawan Kuasa dengan Media, Studi Eksplorasi Manajemen Media Watchdoc Documentary Maker sebagai Media Alternatif.*" (Fighting Power with Media: Exploration Study of Media Management, Watchdoc Documentary Maker as Alternative Media). Bachelor's degree thesis. University of Brawijaya, 2017. (My translation)

Ariefiansyah, Rhino and Hestu Prahara, "*Kolaborasi dan Refleksivitas dalam Penciptaan Representasi Etnografi Visual dalam Bentuk Video Dokumenter: Sebuah Pengalaman*" *(Collaboration and Reflexivity in the Making of Ethnographic Representation in a Documentary Video: An Experience),* paper presented at FFD 2011, Yogyakarta, December 2011. (My translation).

Armando, Ade. *Televisi Indonesia Di Bawah Kapitalisme Global*. Jakarta: Penerbit Buku Kompas, 2016.

Arthur, Paul. "Extreme Makeover: The Changing Face of Documentary." *Cinéaste* 30, no. 3 (2005): 18-23. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41689868.

Aryanto, Imam Karyadi. *Festival Film di Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, 2015* (*Film Festivals in Yogyakarta, 2015*). Yogyakarta: Dinas Kebudayaan Provinsi DIY, 2016.

Aspinall, Edward. *Opposing Suharto: Compromise, Resistance, and Regime Change in Indonesia*. Stanford, Calf.: Stanford University Press, 2005.

Aspinall, Edward, and Geert Arend Van. Klinken. *The State and Illegality in Indonesia*. KITLV Press, 2011.

Aspinall, Edward, and Geert Arend Van. Klinken, eds. *The State and Illegality in Indonesia*. KITLV Press, 2011.

Atkinson, Stephen Peter. "Watching Indonesia: An Ethnography of The Ether." PhD thesis, Flinders University, 2002.

Atmano, Srie. *Katalog Film-film Produksi PFN 1962-1968.* (*PFN Film Catalogue 1962 – 1968*). Jakarta: Pusat Film Negara, 1969.

Azoulay, Ariella. *The Civil Contract of Photography*. (New York: Zone Books, 2008)

Barker, Thomas. "Historical Inheritance and Film Nasional in Post-Reformasi Indonesian Cinema." *Asian Cinema,* 21, no. 2 (2010): 7-24. doi:10.1386/ac.21.2.7_1.

Barkin, Gareth. "The Foreignizing Gaze: Producers, Audiences, and Symbols of the 'Traditional'." *Asian Journal of Communication*16, no. 4 (2006): 352-70. doi:10.1080/01292980601012386.

Barton, Greg. *Gus Dur: Abdurrahman Wahid, Muslim Democrat, Indonesian President*. Sydney: UNSW Press, 2002.

Beittinger-Lee, Verena. *(Un)civil Society and Political Change in Indonesia: A Contested Arena*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Berry, Chris. "Getting Real: Chinese documentary, Chinese Postsocialism (2007)." in *Documentary Film Reader: History, Theory Criticism,* edited by Jonathan Kahana, 943-955. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Berry, Chris, Soyoung Kim, and Lynn Spigel. *Electronic Elsewheres Media, Technology, and the Experience of Social Space*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

Berry, Chris.Transnational Culture in East Asia and the Logic of Assemblage", *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 41 (2013), 453–470.

Calhoun, Craig, ed. *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011.

Carroll, Archie B. "A History of Corporate Social *Responsibility: Concepts and Practices."* In *The Oxford Handbook of Corporate Social Responsibility*, edited by Andrew Crane, Abigail McWilliams, Dirk Matten, Jeremy Moon & Donald Siegel, 19-46. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Chanan, Michael. *The Politics of Documentary*. London: BFI, 2007.

Chapman, James. *The New Film History: Sources, Methods, Approaches*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Chapman, James, H. Mark. Glancy, and Sue Harper. *The New Film History: Sources, Methods, Approaches*. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Chu, Yingchi. *Chinese Documentaries: From Dogma to Polyphony*. London: Routledge, 2009.

Coppens, Laura, and Yvonne Michalik, eds. *Asian Hot Shots: Indonesian Cinema*. Marburg: Schüren, 2009.

Corby, Alexandra. "It's Not Just About Films: Activist Film Festivals in Post-New Order Indonesia." in *Activist Film Festivals: Towards A Political Subject,* edited by Sonia Tascon and Tyson Wils, 183-195, Bristol: Intellect, 2017.

Cribb, Robert. "Unresolved problems in the Indonesian killings 1965-1966" in *Asian Survey*, 42, no. 4 (2002), 550-563

Cvetkovich, Ann. *Archive of Feelings*. Duke University Press.

Cvetkovich, Ann. *Depression A Public Feeling*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2012.

Cvetkovich, Ann. “Public Feelings.” *South Atlantic Quarterly.* 106, no. 3 (2007): 459–468. doi: https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-2007-004

Davies, Lyell. “Off-screen Activities and the Documentary Film Screening.” in *Activist Film Festivals: Towards A Political Subject,* edited by Sonia Tascon and Tyson Wils, 39-57. Bristol: Intellect, 2017.

De Michiel, Helen and Patricia R. Zimmermann. “Documentary as Open Space.” In *Documentary Film Book,* edited by Brian Winston, 355-365. London: BFI, 2013.

De Valck, Marijke. *Film Festivals From European Geopolitics to Global Cinephilia*. Amsterdam University Press, 2007.

De Valck, Marijke, Brendan Kredell, and Skadi Loist. *Film Festivals History, Theory, Method, Practice*. London: Routledge, 2016.

Deprez, Camille, and Judith Pernin. *Post-1990 Documentary: Reconfiguring Independence*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015.

Edwards, Dan. *Independent Chinese Documentary: Alternative Visions, Alternative Publics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015.

Elkof, Stefan. *Power and Political Culture in Suharto’s Indonesia: The Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) and Decline of the New Order (1986–98)*. Copenhagen: Nias Press, 2003.

Farid, Hilmar. "Indonesia’s Original Sin: Mass Killings and Capitalist Expansion, 1965–66." *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*6, no. 1 (2005): 3-16. doi:10.1080/1462394042000326879.

Febriyani, Sindy and Dhuha Ramadhani, “*Jakarta Unfair: Berita-berita di Media Tidak Tepat.*” (Jakarta Unfair: News in the Media is Inaccurate). Interviewed by Wisnu Prasetya Utomo. *Remotivi*, 26 Januari 2017, http://www.remotivi.or.id/wawancara/432/Jakarta-Unfair:-Berita-Berita-Penggusuran-di-Media-Tidak-Tepat. (My translation).

Festival Film Dokumenter. *Buku Program 2004.* (Programme Catalogue 2004). Yogyakarta: FFD, 2004.

Festival Film Dokumenter. *Buku Program 2005.* (Programme Catalogue 2005). Yogyakarta: FFD, 2005.

Festival Film Dokumenter. *Buku Program 2006.* (Programme Catalogue 2006). Yogyakarta: FFD, 2006.

Festival Film Dokumenter. *Buku Program 2007.* (Programme Catalogue 2007). Yogyakarta: FFD, 2007.

Festival Film Dokumenter. *Buku Program 2009.* (Programme Catalogue 2009). Yogyakarta: FFD, 2009.

Festival Film Dokumenter. *Buku Program 2010.* (Programme Catalogue 2010). Yogyakarta: FFD, 2010.

Festival Film Dokumenter. *Buku Program 2011.* (Programme Catalogue 2011). Yogyakarta: FFD, 2011.

Festival Film Dokumenter. *Buku Program 2012.* (Programme Catalogue 2012). Yogyakarta: FFD, 2012.

Festival Film Dokumenter. *Buku Program 2013.* (Programme Catalogue 2013). Yogyakarta: FFD, 2013.

Festival Film Dokumenter. *Buku Program 2014.* (Programme Catalogue 2014). Yogyakarta: FFD, 2014.

Festival Film Dokumenter. *Buku Program 2015.* (Programme Catalogue 2015). Yogyakarta: FFD, 2015.

Festival Film Dokumenter. *Buku Program 2016.* (Programme Catalogue 2016). Yogyakarta: FFD, 2016.

Fraser, Nancy. "Rethinking Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy." in *Habermas and Public Sphere,* edited by Craig Calhoun,109-142. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992.

Goodfellow, Robert W. "Sing Wis Ya Wis: What is Past is Past. Forgetting What It Was To Remember The Indonesian Killing of 1965." PhD thesis, University of Wollongong, 2013.

Garnham, Nicholas. *The Media and the Public Sphere in Habermas and the Public Sphere,* edited by Craig Calhoun, 359-376. Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1996.

Gripsurd, Jostein, Hallvard Moe, Anders Molander and Graham Murdock, "Editor's Note." in *The Idea of the Public Sphere: A Reader,* edited by Jostein Gripsrud, Hallvard Moe, Anders Molander and Graham Murdock, xiii-xxviii. Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2010.

Gripsrud, Jostein, Hallvard Moe, and Anders Molander. *The Public Sphere*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2011.

Habermas, Jurgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inguiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001.

Hadiz, Vedi. "Indonesia's Year of Democratic Setbacks: Towards a New Phase of Deepening Illiberalism?" *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, 53, no. 3, (2017): 261-278, DOI: 10.1080/00074918.2017.1410311

Haenens, Leen d', Effendi Gazali, and Chantal Verelst. "Indonesian Television News-Making Before and After Suharto." *Gazette,* 61, no. 2 (1999): 127–52. doi:10.1177/0016549299061002003.

Halberstam, Judith. *Female Masculinity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998.

Hanan, David. "The Films of Garin Nugroho: Political Documentaries and Essay Films by Garin Nugroho in Late New Order and Post 'Reformasi' Indonesia." *Spectator*, 24, no.2, (2004): 39 – 49.

Hanan, David. "Observational Documentary Comes to Indonesia." *Southeast Asian Independent Cinema,* edited by Timan Baumgartel, 105-16. Singapore: NUS Press, 2012.

Hanan, David. *Cultural Specificity in Indonesian Film: Diversity in Unity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

Hannay, Alastair. *On the Public*. London: Routledge, 2005.

Hansen, Miriam. *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film*. 1996.

Harbord, Janet. *Film Cultures*. London: Sage Publications, 2002.

Harbord, Janet. "Film Festival – Time-event." In *Film Festival Reader,* edited by Dina Iordanova, 127-133. St. Andrews: St. Andrews Film Studies, 2013.

Hardiman, F. Budi. *Ruang Publik: Melacak Partisipasi Demokratis Dari Polis Sampai Cyberspace*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2010.

Hefner, Robert W. *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*. Princeton (N.J.): Princeton University Press, 2000.

Heider, Karl G. *Indonesian Cinema: National Culture on Screen*. University of Hawaii Press, 1991.

Herdiany, Dian. "*Film Dokumenter Indonesia: Sudah Merdekakah Kita*?" (*Documentary Film: Have We been Free?*). Paper presented at FFD 2011, Yogyakarta, December 2011. (My translation).

Hernes, Tor. *Understanding Organization as Process: Theory for a Tangled World*. London: Routledge, 2009.

Heryanto, Ariel. "Where communism never dies: Violence, trauma and narration in the last Cold War capitalist authoritarian state" in *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 2, no. 2 (1999), 147-177.

Heryanto, Ariel. *The State Terrorism and Political Identity in Indonesia: Fatally Belonging*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Heryanto, Ariel. *Identity and Pleasure the Politics of Indonesian Screen Culture*. Singapore: NUS, 2014.

Hollander, Ed, Leen d'Haenens and Jo Bardoel. "Television Performance in Indonesia: Steering between Civil Society, State and Market", *Asian Journal of Communication,* 19, no.1 (2009): 39-58. DOI: 10.1080/01292980802618098

Imanda, Tito. "Pembuat Film dan Praktek Film di Yogyakarta." (Filmmakers and Filmmaking Practices in Yogyakarta)." PhD thesis, University of Indonesia, 2016.

Imanjaya, Ekky. "The Cultural Traffic of Classic Indonesian Exploitation Cinema." PhD Thesis, University of East Anglia, 2018.

Iordanova, Dina, and Torchin Leshu, eds. *Film Festival Yearbook 4: Film Festivals and Activism*. St. Andrews: St. Andrews Film Studies, 2012.

Iordanova, Dina. "The Film Festival Circuit." In *The Film Festival Reader,* edited by Dina Iordanova, 109-126. St. Andrews: St. Andrews Film Studies, 2013.

Irawanto, Budi "Beyond Big Dramatic Moments: Indonesian Documentary Films in 21st Century," in *Asian Documentary Today* edited by Jane HC Yu and Asian Network of Democracy, 109-129. Busan: Busan International Film Festival, 2012.

Irawanto, Budi. "Contemporary Indonesian Independent Documentaries in the Yogyakarta Documentary Film Festival: Notes from the Juror's Seat." *Asian Cinema*21, no. 2 (2010): 150-62. doi:10.1386/ac.21.2.150_4.

Irawanto, Budi. “Emancipating Desire, Empowering Fantasy: Cultural Politics of Contemporary Cinema in Indonesia and Malaysia.” PhD thesis, National University of Singapore, 2014.

Izharuddin, Alicia. *Gender and Islam in Indonesian Cinema*. Singapore: Springer Verlag, 2018.

Jurriëns, Edwin. *From Monologue to Dialogue: Radio and Reform in Indonesia*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2009.

Jurriëns, Edwin. “‘Radio Active’, The Creation of Media-literate Audiences in Post-Soeharto Indonesia.” in *Politics and Media in Twenty First Century Indonesia: Decade of Democracy*, edited by Krishna Sen and David Hill, 141-158. London and New York: Routledge, 2010.

Kahana, Jonathan. *Intelligence Work: The Politics of American Documentary*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2008.

Kersten, Carool. *Islam in Indonesia the Contest for Society, Ideas and Values*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

King, Victor T. “Some Observations on the Samin Movement of North-Central Java: Suggestions for the Theoretical Analysis of the Dynamics of Rural Unrest.” *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Deel*, 129, no. 4 (1973): 457-481.

Kitley, Philip. *Television, Nation, and Culture in Indonesia*. Athens: Ohio University Central for International Studies, 2000

Kitley, Philip. *Television, Regulation and Civil Society in Asia*. London: Routledge Curzon, 2002.

Kitley, Philip. “Civil Society in Charge? Television and Public Sphere in Indonesia After Reformasi.” In *Television, Regulation and Civil Society in Asia,* edited by Philip Kitley, 97-114. London and New York: Routledge, 2002.

Kitley, Philip. "In Court with the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission: Old Battles and New Identities in the Context of Reform." *The Pacific Review*21, no. 3 (2008): 351-67. doi:10.1080/09512740802134208.

Knee, Adam. “Film Festival Downsizing, The Tale of Two Southeast Asian Cities.” *Asian Cinema*, 20, no.1, (2009): 219-225.

Kristanto, J.B. *Nonton Film Nonton Indonesia (Watching Film Watching Indonesia)*. Jakarta: Penerbit Buku Kompas, 2004.

Kurnia, Novi. “Industri Perfilman Indonesia: Analisis Ekonomi Politik terhadap Industri Perfilman Indonesia dalam Perspektif World-System Theory.” (Indonesian Film Industry: Political Economic Analysis of the Indonesian Film Industry from a World-System Theory Perspective. Master diss., University of Indonesia, 2005.

Kurnia, Novi. “Writing, Documentary Films, and Everything in Between, A Conversation with Yuli Andari.” in *Indonesian Women Filmmakers,* edited by Yvonne Michalik, 213-231. Berlin: regiospectra, 2013.

Langley, Ann and Haridimos Tsoukas. “Introducing “Perspectives on Process Organization Studies.” in *Process, Sensemaking and Organizing,* edited by Tor Hernes and Sally Maitlis, 1-26. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Liddle, R. William. "The Relative Autonomy of the Third World Politician: Soeharto and Indonesian Economic Development in Comparative Perspective." *International Studies Quarterly*35, no. 4 (1991): 403. doi:10.2307/2600948.

Lyon, Margo. “Dasar-dasar Konflik di Daerah Pedesaan di Jawa” (Basis of Land Conflict in Rural Java) in Tjondronegoro, SMP and Gunawan Wiradi (eds.) *Dua Abad Penguasaan Tanah: Pola Penguasaan Tanah dari Masa ke Masa* (*Two Centuries of Land Tenure: Patterns of Centuries of Land Tenure*). Jakarta: LP3ES, 1984.

MacGregor, Katherine E. *History in Uniform: Military Ideology and the Construction of Indonesias past*. Honolulu, Hawaii: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 2007.

Mayne, Judith. *Cinema and Spectatorship*. London: Routledge, 1993.

Mayo, Marjorie. *Global Citizens: Social Movements and the Challenge of Globalization*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press, 2015.

McLagan, Meg. “Principles, Publicity, and Politics: Notes on Human Rights Media” in *Visual Anthropology*, 105, no.3, (2003), 605-612.

McLagan, Meg. “Imagining impact: Documentary Film and the Production of Political Effect.” in *Sensible Politics: The Visual Culture of Nongovernment Activism,* edited by Meg McLagan and Yates McKee, 305-319. New York: Zone Book, 2012.

McLagan, Meg and Yates McKee, eds. *Sensible Politics: The Visual Culture of Nongovernmental Activism*. New York: Zone Books, 2012.

Mediarta, Agus. “Konfiden and the Promotion of Indonesian Short Films.” *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 8, no.2, (2007): 308-309, DOI: 10.1080/14649370701238821.

Melvin, Jess. *The Army and The Indonesian Genocide: Mechanics of Mass Murder*. Oxford: Routledge, 2018.

Jess Melvin, “The Road to Genocide: Indonesian Military Planning to Seize State Power Prior to 1 October 1965”, in (eds.) Katharine McGregor · Jess Melvin Annie Pohlman. *The Indonesian Genocide of 1965 Causes, Dynamics and Legacies.* New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2018.

Merriam, Sharan B. *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009.

Michalik, Yvonne. *Indonesian Women Filmmakers*. Berlin: Regiospectra Verlag Berlin, 2013.

Michalik, Yvonne, and Laura Coppens, eds. *Asian Hot Shots: Indonesian Cinema*. Marburg: Schüren, 2009.

Moertono, Soemarsaid. *State and Statecraft in Old Java: A Study of the Later Mataram Period, 16th to 19th Century*. Jakarta: Equinox Pub., 2009.

Mohamad, Goenawan. *Celebrating Indonesia: Fifty Years with the Ford Foundation, 1953-2003*. Jakarta: Ford Foundation, 2003.

Mulder, Niels. *Indonesian Images: The Culture of the Public World*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius Pub. House, 2000.

Nagazumi, Akira. *The Dawn of Indonesian Nationalism: The Early Years of the Budi Utomo, 1908-1918*. Tokyo: Institute of Developing Economies, 1972.

Nasution, Rahung. "*Kuasa Pengetahuan*" (Power Knowledge), paper presented at FFD 2011, Yogyakarta, December 2011. (My translation).

Negt, Oskar, Alexander Kluge, Peter Labanyi, Jamie Owen Daniel, and Assenka Oksiloff. *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere*. London: Verso, 2016.

Nichols, Bill. *Speaking Truths with Film: Evidence, Ethics, Politics in Documentary*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2016.

Nichols, Bill. *Introduction to Documentary*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2017.

Nugroho, Eryanto. "Bill on societal organisations (RUU Ormas) and freedom of association in Indonesia." in *The International Journal of Not-for-profit Law,* 15, no.1, (March 2013), online http://www.icnl.org/research/journal/vol15iss1/special_2.htm

Nugroho, Garin. "An Interview with Garin Nugroho." Interview by Ishizaka Kenji. *Docbox Yamagata International Film Festival.* https://www.yidff.jp/docbox/14/box14-2-1-e.html.

Nugroho, Garin, and Dyna Herlina. *Krisis Dan Paradoks Film Indonesia*. Jakarta: Penerbit Buku Kompas, 2015.

Papacharissi, Zizi. *Affective Publics: Sentiment, Technology and Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Paramaditha, Intan. "The Wild Child's Desire: Cinema, Sexual Politics and the Experimental Nation in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia." PhD thesis, New York University, 2014.

Paramaditha, Intan. "Cinema, Sexuality and Censorship in Post-Soeharto Indonesia." Edited by Tilman Baumgartel. *Southeast Asian Independent Cinema*, 2012, 69-88. doi:10.5790/hongkong/9789888083602.003.0007.

Paramaditha, Intan. "Film Studies in Indonesia." *Bijdragen Tot De Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde / Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia*173, no. 2-3 (2017): 357-75. doi:10.1163/22134379-17302006.

Pepinsky, Thomas. *Economic Crises and the Breakdown of Authoritarian Regimes Indonesia and Malaysia in Comparative Perspective.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Peransi, D. A. *D.A. Peransi Dan Film*. Edited by Marselli Sumarno. Jakarta: Lembaga Studi Film, 1997.

Powdermaker, Hortense. *Hollywood the Dream Factory: An Anthropologist Looks at the Movie-makers*. Mansfield Centre, CT: Martino Publishing, 2013.

Prakosa, Gotot. *Film Pinggiran: Antologi Film Pendek, Film Eksperimental, Dan Film Dokumenter*. Jakarta: Yayasan Seni Visual Indonesia & Koperasi Sinematografi IKJ, 2008.

Prasad, Ugoran and Intan Paramaditha. “Performing Mlticultural Space in Opera Jawa: The Tension between National and Transnational Stages.” In *Asian Cinema and the Use of Space: Interdisciplinary Perspectives,* edited by Lilian Chee and Edna Lim, 155-170. London and New York: Routledge, 2015.

Pratiwi, Maria Sherly Jevita. *“Rancang Bangun Apikasi Pengelolaan Magang Online pada Kompas TV Surabaya.”* (Application Design for Online Internship for Kompas TV Surabaya). Bachelor Thesis, Stikom Surabaya, 2015. (My translation).

Pratt, Geraldine, and San Juan Rose Marie. *Film and Urban Space: Critical Possibilities*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014.

Rambadetta, Lexy. “*Merekam Kehidupan Apa Adanya.*” (Recording Life as It Is), Interview by Wimar Witoelar, 28 February 2005, http://www.perspektifbaru.com/wawancara/468. (My translation).

Rancajale, Hafiz. “*Filem Dokumenter Pasca Reformasi: Sebuah Kritik*” (Post-Reformasi Documentary Film: A Critic). Paper presented at FFD 2011, Yogyakarta, December 2011. (My Translation).

Rhyne, Ragan. “Film Festival Circuits and Stakeholders.” in *The Film Festival Reader,* edited by Dina Iordanova, 135-150. St. Andrews: St. Andrews Film Studies, 2013.

Robinson, Geoffrey B. *The Killing Season: A History of the Indonesian Massacre 1965-66.* Princeton: Priceton University Press, 2018.

Robinson, Luke. *Independent Chinese Documentary: From the Studio to the Street*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Robinson, Luke. “Sole Traders, Cultural Brokers, and Chinese-Language Film Festivals in the United Kingdom: The London Taiwan Cinefest and the Chinese Visual Festival.” In *Chinese Film Festivals: Sites of Translation,* edited by Chris Berry and Luke Robinson, 193-213. New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2017.

Robison, Richard. *Indonesia: The Rise of Capital.* Singapore: Equinox, 2009.

Robison, Richard and Vedi Hadiz. *Reorganising Power in Indonesia: The Politics of Oligarchy in an Age of Markets.* New York: Routledge, 2004.

Robison, Richard. *Indonesia: The Rise of Capital*. Jakarta: Equinox Pub., 2009.

Roisamri, Lalu and Nauval Yazid. “Foreword” in *JIFFest, 12th Jakarta International Film Festival Catalogue.* Jakarta: JIFFest, 2010.

Roosa, John. *Pretext for Mass Murder: The 30th September Movement and Suharto’s Coup D’etat in Indonesia*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006.

Said, Salim. *Shadows on the Silver Screen: A Social History of Indonesian Film*. Translated by Toenggoel P. Siagian. Jakarta: Lontar Foundation, 1991.

Sen, Krishna. *Indonesian Cinema: Framing the New Order*. London: Zed Books, 1994.

Sen, Krishna. “Introduction: Re-forming media in Indonesia’s transition into democracy.” in *Politics and The Media in Twenty-First Century Indonesia,* edited by Krishna Sen and David Hill, 1-11. New York: Routledge, 2011.

Sen, Krishna, and David T. Hill. *Media, Culture and Politics in Indonesia*. Jakarta: Equinox, 2006.

Sen, Krishna, and David Hill, eds. *Politics and the Media in Twenty-first Century Indonesia: Decade of Democracy*. Routledge, 2012.

Setjiadi, Charlotte. "Ahok's Downfall and the Rise of Islamist Populism in Indonesia." *Perspective* (Singapore: ISEAS –Yusof Ishak Institute Analyse Current Events*)*, No. 38, 8 June 2017.

Smaill, Belinda. *The Documentary: Politics, Emotion, Culture*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

Strassler, Karen. "Stories of Culture: Difference, Nation and Childhood in 'Children of a Thousand Islands,' an Indonesian Television Series." *Sights—Visual Anthropology Forum 2006* (1996), http://cc.joensuu.fi/sights/karens.htm

Suryani, Ade. "*Sejarah dan Perkembangan Film Dokumentari Indonesia, 1908-2008*" (History and Development of Indonesian Documentary Film, 1900-2008)." Bachelor's degree thesis, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2009.

Suwarto, Dyna Herlina, Firly Annisa, Kurniawan Saputro and Zaki Habibi. *Mapping Filmmakers in Yogyakarta.* Yogyakarta: Dinas Kebudayaan Provinsi DIY, 2015.

Tanzil, Chandra, Rhino Ariefiansyah, and Tonny Trimarsanto. *Pemula Dalam Film Dokumenter Gampang-gampang Susah*. Jakarta: In-Docs, 2010.

Tapsell, Ross. *Media Power in Indonesia: Oligarchs, Citizens and the Digital Revolution*. London and New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018.

Tascón, Sonia. "Watching Other's Troubles: Revisiting "The Film Act" and Spectatorship in Activist Film Festival." In *Activist Film Festival: Towards A Political Subject,* edited by Sonia Tascon and Tyson Wils, 21-37. Bristol: Intellect, 2017.

Tascón, Sonia M., and Tyson Wils, eds. *Activist Film Festivals: Towards a Political Subject*. Bristol, UK ; Chicago, USA: Intellect, 2017.

Tatzyo, Claire. *Nia Dinata and Indonesia's post-New Order Film Culture*. Flinders Asia Centre Occasional Paper 3, May 2011. http://www.flinders.edu.au/sabs/sis-files/fac/asiaonline/AsiaOnline-03.pdf

Torchin, Leshu. *Creating the Witness: Documenting Genocide on Film, Video, and the Internet*. London and Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012.

Torchin, Leshu. "Networked for Advocacy: Film Festivals and Activism." in *Film Festival Yearbook 4: Film Festival and Activism,* edited by Dina Iordanova and Leshu Torchin, 1-12. St. Andrews: St. Andrews Film Studies, 2012.

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Turner, Graeme. *Film as Social Practice*. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2009.

Uhlin, Anders. "Transnational Democratic Diffusion and Indonesian Democracy Discourses." *Third World Quarterly*14, no. 3 (1993): 517-44. doi:10.1080/01436599308420340.

Uhlin, Anders. *Indonesia and the "Third Wave of Democratization": The Indonesian Pro-democracy Movement in a Changing World*. New York: St. Martins Press, 1997.

Valck, Marijke De. *Film Festivals: From European Geopolitics to Global Cinephilia*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007.

Van Heeren, Katinka. *Contemporary Indonesian Film: Spirits of Reform and Ghosts from the past*. Leiden: Brill, 2014.

Van Klinken, Gerry. "Introduction: Democracy, Markets and the Assertive Middle." in *In Seach of Middle Indonesia: Middle Classes in Provincial Towns,* edited byGerry van Klinken and Ward Berenschot, 1-32. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014.

Van Klinken, Gerry and Ward Berenschot. *In Search of Middle Indonesia: Middle Classes in Provincial Towns*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014.

Michael Warner. "Publics and Counterpublics." *Public Culture* 14, no. 1 (2002): 49-90. https://muse.jhu.edu/

Warner, Michael. *Publics and Counterpublics*. New York: Zone Books, 2014.

Wibawa, Satria. "The Children of a Nation: The Representation of Children in Garin Nugroho's Films." In *Asian Hot Shots: Indonesia,* edited by Yvonne Michalik and Laura Coppens, 119-145. Marburg: Schuren, 2009.

Williams, Raymond. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society.* London: Fontana Press, 1983.

Winston, Brian. *The Documentary Film Book*. London: BFI, 2013.

Wong, Cindy H. *Film Festivals: Culture, People, and Power on the Global Screen*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011.

Zamjani, Irsyad. *Sekularisasi Setengah Hati Politik Islam Indonesia Dalam Periode Formatif (Half-hearted Secularisation: Politics of Islam in Indonesia in Formative Period)*. Jakarta: Dian Rakyat, 2010.

Interview with the author

Aziz, Abduh. Interview with the author. 16 November 2016.

Damaihati, Alia. Interview with the author. 8 September 2017.

Hapsari, Amelia, Interview. 6 December 2016.

Harmayn, Shanty. Interview with the author. 7 September 2017.

Kurniawan, Andy Panca. Interview with the author. 22 December 2016.

Laksono, Dandhy. Interview with the author. 22 December 2016.

Laksono, Dandhy. Interview with the author. 16 August 2017.

Nugraheni, Dwi Sujati. Interview with the author. 12 September 2017.

Nuranto, Norbertus. Interview with the author. 18 November 2016.

Ramadhani, Dhuha. Interview with the author. 14 August 2017.

Souisa, Hellena Yoranita. Interview with the author. 19 December 2017.

Varadila, interview, 15 January 2018.

Media report

Alpito, Agustinus Shindo. "*Yang Ketu7uh, Mengemas Pilpres dengan Bumbu Kisah Kaum Proletar*." (*The Seventh One*, Packaging the Presidential Election with the Story of Proletariat). In *MetroTVNews.com*, 16 August 2014. Accessed on 2 January 2018. http://hiburan.metrotvnews.com/film/yKXMQr0N-yang-ketu7uh-mengemas-pilpres-dengan-bumbu-kisah-kaum-proletar. (My translation).

Armando, Ade. "*Dandhy Dwi Laksono, Aceh dan SCTV.*" (Dandhy Dwi Laksono, Aceh and SCTV). In *Ade Armando*, 21 June 2003. Accessed on 14th December 2017. http://adearmando.com/?p=276. (My translation).

BBC News. "Mass Prayer Rally in Jakarta Against Governor 'Ahok'." In *BBC Indonesia*, 2 December 2016. Accessed 17 December 2018. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-38178764

Belarminus, Robertus. "Ahok: Rancangan Kami Tidak Pernah Berniat Mengusir Nelayan." (Ahok: Our Design Is Not Intended to Evict Fishermen). In *Kompas.com*, 13 April 2017. Accessed on 12 December 2017. http://megapolitan.kompas.com/read/2017/04/13/00231121/ahok.rancangan.kami.tidak.pernah.berniat.mengusir.nelayan. (My translation).

Bestika, Vauriz. "Pelabelan Diri dalam Q Film Festival." (Self-labelling in Q Film Festival), in *Cinema Poetica*, 22 September 2015, accessed 1 June 2017. http://cinemapoetica.com/pelabelan-diri-dalam-q-film-festival. (My translation).

Child, Ben. "Gay film festival attacked by masked Islamic protesters." In *The Guardian*, 29 September 2011, accessed 1 June 2017. https://www.theguardian.com/film/2010/sep/29/gay-film-festival-jakarta-attacked.

Detik.com. "*SCTV dan Eks Produser Akhirnya Damai, Siap Rehab Nama Baik.*" (SCTV and Former Producer Finally Settled, Ready for Name Rehabilitation). In *Detik.com*, 8 December 2005. Accessed on 14 December 2017. https://news.detik.com/berita/d-494694/sctv--eks-produser-akhirnya-damai-siap-rehab-nama-baik. (My translation).

Eka, Mahardi. "*Jiffest Kembali Adakan Open Air Cinema*." (Jiffest Run Open Air Cinema Again). In *Kapanlagi.com*, 4 December 2014. Accessed on 2 January 2018. https://www.kapanlagi.com/showbiz/film/indonesia/jiffest-kembali-adakan-open-air-cinema-831bba.html. (My translation).

Galiartha, Gilang. "*Ekspedisi Indonesia Biru Tuntas di Bekasi*." (Indonesia Biru Expedition Finished in Bekasi). In *Antaranews.com*, 31 December 2015. Accessed on 21 December 2018. https://www.antaranews.com/berita/537687/ekspedisi-indonesia-biru-tuntas-di-bekasi. (My Translation).

Hasan, Rofiqi. "*Pembuat Film Dokumenter ASEAN Kumpul di Bali.*" (ASEAN Documentary Filmmakers Gathered in Bali). In *Tempo*, 17 November 2012. Accessed 15 December 2018. https://seleb.tempo.co/read/442265/pembuat-film-dokumenter-asean-berkumpul-di-ubud/full&view=ok. (My translation).

Hukumonline.com. "*Gugatan Dandhy ke SCTV Ditolak Pengadilan.*" (Dandhy's Lawsuit against SCTV was Rejected by the Court). In *Hukum Online*, 2 April 2004. Accessed on 14 December 2017. http://www.hukumonline.com/berita/baca/hol10042/gugatan-dandhy-ke-sctv-ditolak-pengadilan. (My translation).

Ibrahim, Gibran Maulana. "*Agus Yudhoyono Nonton Film tentang Penggusuran Bersama Warga*." (Agus Yudhoyono Watches Film About Eviction with Citizens). In *Detik.com.* Accessed 12 December 2018. https://news.detik.com/berita/3384835/agus-yudhoyono-nonton-film-tentang-penggusuran-bersama-warga. (My translation).

Ihsanuddin. "*Seorang Petani Kendeng Meninggal Dunia, Ini Respons Jokowi*" (A Kendeng Farmer Has Died and This is Jokowi's Response). In *Kompas.com*, 31 March 2017. Accessed on 17 December 2018. https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2017/03/21/14484471/seorang.petani.kendeng.meninggal.dunia.ini.respons.jokowi. (My translation).

Jakarta Post. "Snowballing Support for Kendeng Resident." In *The Jakarta Post*, 20 March 2017. Accessed on 18 December 2017. http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/03/20/snowballing-support-for-kendeng-residents.html.

Jakarta Post. "Anti-cement Plant Rally Goes on After Farmer's Death." In *The Jakarta Post*, 22 March 2017. Accessed on 18 December 2017. http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/03/22/anti-cement-plant-rally-goes-on-after-farmers-death.html.

Jakarta Post. "Supreme Court Ruling on Construction of Kendeng Cement Factory must be Obeyed." In *The Jakarta Post*, 24 March 2017. Accessed on 18 December 2017. http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/03/24/supreme-court-ruling-on-construction-of-kendeng-cement-factory-must-be-obeyed.html.

Jayasrana, Dimas. "A fragmented History: Sort Films in Indonesia." 29 November 2015. In *Cinema Poetica*, accessed 12 December 2018, http://cinemapoetica.com/a-fragmented-history-short-films-in-indonesia/.

Kompas.com. "'*Yang Ketu7uh' Film Dokumenter Ketujuh tentang Presiden Ketujuh.*" (The seventh One, the Seventh Documentary Film about the Seventh President"). In *Kompas.com.* 15 September 2014. Accessed 24 December 2017 http://entertainment.kompas.com/read/2014/09/15/220437010/.Yang.Ketu7uh.Film.Dokumenter.Ketujuh.tentang.Presiden.Ketujuh. (My translation).

Kwok, Yenny. "Conservative Islam Has Scored a Disquieting Victory in Indonesia's Normally Secular Politics." In *Time*, 20 April 2017. accessed 18 December 2018. http://time.com/4747709/indonesia-jakarta-election-governor-islam-christianity-ahok-anies/

Lingkar LSM. "Apa Beda Yayasan dan Perkumpulan?" (What is the Difference Between Yayasan and Perkumpulan?). In *Lingkar LSM*, 26 March 2013. Accessed on 9 December 2018, http://lingkarlsm.com/apa-beda-yayasan-dan-perkumpulan/. (My translation).

LIPI. "*Tjandra Wibowo: Idealisme yang Tertanam Sejak Kecil*." (Idealism that Has Been Seeded Since the childhood). In *Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia*, 9 August 2008. Accessed on 15 December 2017. http://lipi.go.id/berita/tjandra-wibowo-:-idealisme-yang-tertanam-sejak-kecil/2422. (My translation).

Liputan6.com. "*Puluhan Insan Film Mengembalikan Piala Citra*" (Dozens of 'Film People' Returned their Citra Awards). In *Liputan6.com.* Accessed on 15 May 2017. http://news.liputan6.com/read/135217/puluhan-insan-film-mengembalikan-piala-citra. (My translation).

Liwe, Amelia. "Remembering Permesta." In *Inside Indonesia*, 16 December 2010. Acessed 11 December 2018. https://www.insideindonesia.org/remembering-permesta.

Masyarakat Film Indonesia. "*DPR dan Presiden Diminta Tinjau Kembali UU tentang Perfilman.*" (Parliament and President Asked to Review Film Law). In *Masyarakat Film Indonesia.* 8 October 2009. Accessed on 16 May 2017. https://masyarakatfilmindonesia.wordpress.com/2009/10/08/dpr-dan-presiden-diminta-tinjau-kembali-uu-tentang-perfilman/. (My translation).

Mubarak, Makbul. "Funding Screening Access Confines Aesthetics of Documentary Filmmaker." In *The Jakarta Post*, 27 April 2014. Accessed on 17 December 2018. https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/04/27/funding-screening-access-confines-aesthetics-documentary-filmmakers.html.

Muslim AR. "*Refleksi Rayuan Pulau Palsu di Kampung Nelayan.*" (Reflection of *The Fake Island* in Fishermen's Village). In *Liputan6.* Accessed on 13 December 2017. http://citizen6.liputan6.com/read/2497971/refleksi-rayuan-pulau-palsu-di-kampung-nelayan. (My translation).

Novito, Nico. "Q! Film Fest Raises Awareness on LGBTIQ Issues." In *Jakarta Globe.* Accessed 1 June 2017. http://jakartaglobe.id/archive/q-film-fest-raises-awareness-on-lgbtiq-issues/.

Nurul, Galuh, Luthfian Haekal, and Sukma Prametasari. "*Alkinemokiye, Perjuangan Buruh Lokal Mencari Keadilan Upah.*" (Struggle of Local Labour for Wage Equality). In *Balairung Press*, 12 November 2015. Accessed on 17 December 2018, http://www.balairungpress.com/2015/11/alkinemokiye-perjuangan-buruh-lokal-mencari-keadilan-upah/. (My translation).

NUS. "Film Screening Kala Benoa." In *National University of Singapore*, accessed on 10 December 2018. https://ari.nus.edu.sg/Event/Detail/b13dd730-86b8-46f5-a1e0-78231909ab19. (My translation).

Openaircinema.com. "Jakarta Indonesia: Outdoor Movies Open Air cinema Jakarta International Film Festival." In *Open Air Cinema*, 30 October 2008. Accessed on 2 January 2018. https://openaircinema.us/blog/2008/jakarta-indonesia-outdoor-movies-open-air-cinema-jakarta-international-film-festival-indonesia.

Pitaloka, Dyah Ayu. "*Universitas Brawijaya Larang Dokumenter Alkinemokiye, Samin Vs Semen.*" (University of Brawijaya Banned Alkinemokiye and Samin Vs Semen Documentaries). In *Rappler*, 21 April 2015. Accessed on 15 December 2018. https://www.rappler.com/world/regions/asia-pacific/indonesia/90704-

universitas-brawijaya-larang-dokumenter-alkinemokiye-samin-semen. (My translation).

Purwaningsih and Setiawan. "*Samin versus Semen Diputar di 10 Kota di Jerman*." (Samin versus Semen screened in 10 cities in Germany). In *DW*, 2 May 2017, accessed 14 December 2018. https://www.dw.com/id/samin-vs-semen-diputar-di-10-kota-di-jerman/a-38652664. (My translation).

Putra, Donatus Fernanda. "*Menghidupkan Lagi Romantisme Layar Tancap.*" (To Revive the Romantics on *Layar Tancap*). In *CNN Indonesia.* Accessed on 2 January 2018. https://www.cnnindonesia.com/hiburan/20141123180025-220-13278/menghidupkan-lagi-romantisme-layar-tancap/. (My translation).

Rancajale, Hafiz. "*Sekarang, Filem Pendek (tidak) di Tangan Konfiden."* (Now Short Film is (not) in the Hands of Konfiden). In *Jurnal Footage*, 23 November 2009. Accessed 17 December 2018. http://jurnalfootage.net/v4/sekarang-filem-pendek-tidak-di-tangan-konfiden/. (My translation).

Riandini, Marsita. "*Dari Penyiar TV Hingga Produksi Film Dokumenter*." (From TV Newscaster to Documentary Film Lroducer). In *Pontianak Post*, 23 August 2016. Accessed 23 November 2017. https://www.pontianakpost.co.id/dari-penyiar-televisi-hingga-produksi-film-dokumenter. (My translation).

Ridhoi, M. Ahsan. "*Kepasrahan Warga Bukti Duri Jelang Penggusuran*." (Bukit Duri Inhabitants are Helpless as the Eviction Imminent). In *Tirto.id.* Accessed 15 December 2017. https://tirto.id/kepasrahan-warga-bukit-duri-jelang-penggusuran-cski. (My translation).

Riyardi, Arisman. "*Serunya Nonton Layar Tancap Masa Kini*." (The Excitement of Watching Contemporary *Layar Tancap*). In *Kompasiana*, 16 March 2017. Accessed on 2 January 2018. https://www.kompasiana.com/riyardiarisman/serunya-nonton-layar-tancap-masa-kini_58ca0caed77a611e0af080d2. (My translation).

Rulianto, Angga. "*Penonton minim jadi masalah FFD 2014.*" (Lack of audience is FFD 2014's problem). In *Muvila.com.* Accessed 5 December 2018. http://www.muvila.com/film/artikel/penonton-minim-jadi-masalah-ffd-2014-141213k.html. (My translation).

Sapiie, Marguerite Afra. "Kendeng Farmers Refuse to Halt Protest Against Cement Factory." In *The Jakarta Post*, 18 March 2017. Accessed on 18 December 2017. http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/03/18/kendeng-farmers-refuse-to-halt-protests-against-cement-factory.html.

Siregar, Shalahuddin. "*Rupa-rupa Pendanaan Dokumenter.*" (Variety of Documentary Film Funding). In *Cinema Poetica*, 1 September 2015. Accessed 16 November 2018. https://cinemapoetica.com/rupa-rupa-pendanaan-dokumenter/.(My translation).

Sofian, Evi Mariani. "*Bias Kelas dalam Liputan Gusuran.*" (Class Biases in Reportage on Eviction). In *Remotivi* 15 February 2018. Accessed 13 December 2018. http://www.remotivi.or.id/di-balik-layar/464/Bias-Kelas-dalam-Liputan-Gusuran. (My translation).

Soraya, Atik "*Ibu-ibu Petani Kendeng Tagih Penuntasan Kasus Pabrik Semen.*" (Women of Kendeng Demand the Solution for Cement Factory). In *Tirto.id*, 26

September 2018. Accessed on 17 December 2018. https://tirto.id/ibu-ibu-petani-kendeng-tagih-penuntasan-kasus-pabrik-semen-c2XC. (My translation).

Sukanto, Farli. "*Salam dari Anak Seribu Pulau!*" (Greetings from the Children of Thousand Islands!"). In *Asengblog*. 8 June 2013. Accessed 12 January 2018.

Taopik, Eriek. "*Yoyo Budiman, Generasi Terakhir Operator Layar Tancap*." (Yoyo Budiman, The Last Generation of *Layar Tancap* Operator). In *Blog Bandung Ekspress.* Accessed on 2 January 2018. http://bandungekspres.blogspot.co.uk/2010/04/yoyo-budiman-generasi-terakhir-operator.html. (My translation).

Tempo.co. "*M. Taufik Ajak Anggota DPRD DKI Nonton 'Rayuan Pulau Palsu*." (M. Taufik Asks Members of Local Parliament to Watch 'The Fake Island'). In *Tempo.co.* Accessed on 13 December 2017. https://metro.tempo.co/read/773012/m-taufik-ajak-anggota-dprd-dki-nonton-rayuan-pulau-palsu. (My translation).

TIFA. "*Pasar Gotong Royong: Gugatan Para Pedagang terhadap Proses Revitalisasi Pasar Limbangan.*" (Collective Market: Lawsuit from Traders on Market Revitalisasion). In *TIFA.* Accessed on 13 December 2018. https://www.tifafoundation.org/pasar-gotong-royong-gugatan-para-pedagang-terhadap-proses-revitalisasi-pasar-limbangan/.

Wahab, Oki Hajiansyah. "Antara *AADC2* dan *Rayuan Pulau Palsu.*" (Between AADC2 and The Fake Island). In *Nuwobalak.id.* Accessed on 23 December 2018. http://nuwobalak.id/?p=284. (My translation).

Wijaya, Callistasia Anggun. "Bukti Duri Figure Denies Ahok's Claim about Kampung Susun." In *The Jakarta Post*, 30 September 2016. Accessed on 13 December, 2017, http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2016/09/30/bukit-duri-figure-denies-ahoks-claim-about-kampung-susun.html.

Wildan, Mohamad. "*TRANS 7: Program Acara Bocah Petualang*." (TRANS7: Programme Adventurous Kids). In *Indonesiana, Platform Kebudayaan.* Accessed 17 November 2017. https://kebudayaan.kemdikbud.go.id/ditwdb/2016/10/08/trans-7-program-acara-bocah-petualang/ (My translation).

Wilson, Ian. "Out of the Rubble: Jakarta's Poor and Displaced Seek a Vehicle for Their Voice." In *Indonesia at Melbourne*, 4 October 2016. Accessed on 17 December 2018. http://indonesiaatmelbourne.unimelb.edu.au/out-of-the-rubble-jakartas-poor-and-displaced-seek-a-vehicle-for-their-voice/.

Wiwoho, Bimo "*Jokowi Diminta Gunakan Hak Prerogatif Soal Semen Kendeng.*" (Jokowi Was Asked to Use His Prerogative Right for Semen Kendeng). In *CNN Indonesia.* Accessed on 18 December 2018. https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20170324201525-20-202663/jokowi-diminta-gunakan-hak-prerogatif-soal-semen-kendeng. (My translation).

Wiwoho, Bimo. "*Warga Bukit Duri Menang, Pemprov DKI Wajib Bayar Ganti Rugi*." (Bukit Duri Inhabitants Won, Jakarta Must Pay the Compensation). In *CNN Indonesia.* Accessed on 15 December 2017.

https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20171025214146-12-251123/warga-bukit-duri-menang-pemprov-dki-wajib-bayar-ganti-rugi. (My translation).

Worldcat.org. “Anak Seribu Pulau: Kisah Anak-anak Indonesia.” (Children of Thousand Islands: Tales of Indonesian Children). In *Worldcat.org.* Accessed 14 December 2017. http://www.worldcat.org/title/anak-seribu-pulau-kisah-anak-anak-indonesia/oclc/275174972.

Yulianto, Iwan. “*Film Alkinemokiye, Perjuangan Melawan Penjajahan Freeport di Bumi Papua.*” (Struggle Against Freeport Colonialism in the Land of Papua). In *Iwan Yulianto*, 26 November 2012. Accessed 15 December 2018. https://iwanyuliyanto.wordpress.com/2012/11/26/film-alkinemokiye-perjuangan-melawan-penjajahan-freeport-di-bumi-papua/#comment-5941. (My translation).

Website

ANSA-EAP. “Sains Estetika dan Teknologi (SET).” Accessed on 16 October 2017. http://www.ansa-eap.net/networking/geographic-focus/java-conveners-group-indonesia/country-partners/sains-estetika-dan-teknologi-set/. (My translation).

Ashoka. “Lexy Rambadetta.” Accessed on 18 December 2017, https://www.ashoka.org/en/fellow/lexy-rambadetta.

Boemboe. “About Us.” Accessed 15 February 2018. https://boemboe.org/about.

Berlinale. “At Stake.” Accessed 14 December 2018. https://www.berlinale.de/en/archiv/jahresarchive/2009/02_programm_2009/02_Filmdatenblatt_2009_20097217.html#tab=filmStills.

Bophana Audio Visual Research Centre. “Transmissions 2018.” Accessed 13 December 2018. http://bophana.org/events/transmissions-2018/.

DocNet Southeast Asia. “About DocNet Southeast Asia.” Accessed 23 November 2017. http://www.goethe.de/ins/id/lp/prj/dns/abo/deindex.htm.

DocNet Southeast Asia. “Chopshots 2014.” Accessed 23 November 2017. http://www.goethe.de/ins/id/lp/prj/dns/csf/enindex.htm.

Docsociety. “Hello and Welcome.” Accessed 3 November 2017. https://docsociety.org/

Eagle Institute Indonesia. “About Us.” Accessed 15 December 2018. http://eagleinstitute.id/about. (My translation).

Engage Media. “Papuan Voices.” Accessed on 15 December 2018. http://www.engagemedia.org/Projects/papuanvoices.

FFD 2014. “Retrospective Agnes Varda.” Accessed 16 November 2018, https://ffd.or.id/2014/retrospective/ (My translation).

FI Fest 2018. “Philanthropy Stage.” FI Fest 2018, 17 November 2018. Accessed 2 January 2019. https://fifest.filantropi.or.id/session/philanthropy-pitch-social-philantrhopy-through-documentary-film/.

Ford Foundation. "Grant Database." Accessed 25 November 2018, https://www.fordfoundation.org/work/our-grants/grants-database/grants-all?search=%26SearchText%3Dindonesia&page=0.

Forum Film Bandung. "*Sejarah Festival Film Bandung.*" (History of Bandung Film Festival). Accessed on 10 April 2017. http://www.festivalfilmbandung.com/p/berawal-pada-tahun-1987-sejumlah_23.html, (My translation).

IMDB.com. "Garin Nugroho." Accessed 11 January 2018. http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0637838/awards?ref_=nm_awd.

In-Docs. "Dare to Dream." Accessed 16 November 2018. https://www.in.in-docs.org/dare-to-dream. (My translation).

In-Docs. "Good Pitch^2 Southeast Asia." Accessed 3 November 2017, https://www.in.in-docs.org/goodpitch2sea.

In-Docs. "*Lokakarya Dokumenter.*" (Documentary Workshop). Accessed on 12 December 2018. https://www.in.in-docs.org/lokakarya-dokumenter. (My translation).

Kalyana Shira Foundation. "*Tentang Kami.*" (About Us). Accessed 18 October 2017. http://www.kalyanashirafound.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=section&layout=blog&id=7&Itemid=88&lang=en. (My translation).

Kalyana Shira Foundation. "Workshop Film." Accessed 15 December 2018. http://www.kalyanashirafound.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=48&Itemid=116&lang=en. (My translation).

Koalisi Seni Indonesia. "Konfiden." Accessed 16 December 2018. http://koalisiseni.or.id/tentang-ksi/jawa/yayasan-konfiden/. (My translation).

LA Lights Indiemovie. "About LA Lights Indimovie." Accessed 16 October 2017, http://enjoyindiemovie.blogspot.com/p/about-la-lights-indiemovie.html. (My translation).

Metrotvnews.com. "Pitching Forum Eagle Documentary Competition 2017 (2)." 29 July 2017. Video, 9:17. Accessed 16 August 2018. http://video.metrotvnews.com/headline-news/yNLel16b-pantauan-arus-lalu-lintas-pagi-ini.

Miles Films. "Anak Seribu Pulau." (Children of Thousand Islands). Accessed 13 December 2017. https://milesfilms.net/anak-seribu-pulau/. (My translation).

Miles Films. "Mira Lesmana." Accessed 11 January 2018. http://milesfilms.net/en/about/miralesmana/.

SET Film Workshop. "Sains Estetika Teknologi." (Science, Aesthetics and Techlogy). Accessed on 15 October 2017. http://setfilmworkshop.blogspot.co.uk/p/sains-estetika-teknologi.html. (My translation).

Starvision. "Chand Parvez Servia – President Director." Accessed 18 December 2018, http://www.klikstarvision.com/page/about. (My translation).

Steps. "Steps." Accessed 16 November 2018. http://steps.co.za/

Steps. “Why Democracy?” Accessed 16 November 2018. http://steps.co.za/why-democracy/

Steps. “Why Poverty?” Accessed 16 November 2018. http://steps.co.za/why-poverty/.

Tembi Rumah Budaya. “Tentang Rumah Tembi.”(About Tembi House). Accessed on 25 March 2017. https://www.tembi.net/tentang-rumah-tembi/. (My translation).

Unpublished documents

Aziz, Abduh. “*Evaluasi Yayasan Masyarakat Mandiri Film Indonesia* (YMMFI)” (Evaluation of YMMFI), Jakarta: January 2011. (My translation).

Binaman Utama, *YMMFI Capacity Building Program* (Jakarta: PT Binaman Utama, 2012), 8.

YMMFI. “Narrative Report to Ford Foundation. Grant No.1025-0225.” Jakarta: YMMFI.

YMMFI. “Report from YMMFI Programs 2006-2007 to The Ford Foundation”. Jakarta: YMMFI, 2007.

YMMFI. “Screendocs Jakarta 2007.” Jakarta: YMMFI, 2007.

YMMFI. “Screendocs Traveling 2007.” Jakarta: YMFFI, 2007.

YMMFI. “Statistics on the 1st to 9th JIFFest.” An annex to 9th Jakarta International Film Festival 2007. Official Report, December 7-16, 2007.” Jakarta: YMMFI, 2007.

Facebook post

Dandhy Laksono Facebook post. 1 May 2016. Accessed 27 December 2018. https://www.facebook.com/dandhy.laksono/posts/10154109228593618.